

# THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

Vol. 141

NOVEMBER, 1953

No. 849

EPISODES OF THE MONTH

THE EDITOR

LESSONS OF STRASBOURG

SIR EDWARD BOYLE, Bt.

FRANCE : ANOTHER 1788 ?

ANDRÉ STIBIO

THE H-BOMB: FACT AND FICTION

DENYS SMITH

RAILWAY CONVERSATION PIECE. I

HON. SIR EDWARD CADOGAN

A MONOPOLIST EXPLAINS

A. J. P. TAYLOR

AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS BY EDWARD HYAMS, ERIC  
GILLET, MARK CHAPMAN-WALKER, DAVID MASTERS,  
MILWARD KENNEDY, DIANA SPEARMAN AND ALEC  
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## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

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**ANDRÉ STIBIO:** A leading political journalist in France; an independent with a high reputation for prescience and objectivity.

**DENYS SMITH:** Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* in Washington.

**EDWARD HYAMS:** Novelist and amateur fruit-grower. Has a vineyard in East Kent. Author of *Not In Our Stars*, *The Grape-vine in England*, *Soil and Civilization*, etc.

**HON. SIR EDWARD CADOGAN, K.B.E., C.B.:** Distinguished public servant. M.P. for Reading, 1922-3, for Finchley, 1924-5, and for Bolton, 1940-5. Has been chairman of many committees and a member of Royal Commission on Justices of the Peace, 1946. Author of *Makers of Modern Europe*, etc.

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**ALEC ROBERTSON:** Writer, critic and broadcaster. Author of books on Dvořák, Sacred Music, Plainchant, etc.

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# THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

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## EPISODES OF THE MONTH

SINCE we last wrote the two principal parties have held their annual conferences; both at Margate, in what are superfluously (considering the English climate) called the Winter Gardens. At the Labour Party Conference the official policy statement, *Challenge to Britain*, was endorsed and proposals for more far-reaching nationalization, including that of the land, were defeated. At the same time Mr. Bevan and five of his associates were re-elected to the Executive by the constituency parties. Among the Conservatives there was great enthusiasm and very little disagreement on policy. Mr. Eden celebrated his return with perhaps the best speech he has ever made at a mass meeting, and he was given a great welcome; Mr. Butler and Mr. Macmillan received special ovations; Lord Woolton, to everyone's delight, seemed to have recovered completely from the illness which smote him last year at Scarborough; and the Prime Minister was greeted with a warmth of admiration and devotion which even to him must have seemed remarkable.

In the outside world no progress has been made towards a general *détente*, and in three places—British Guiana, Trieste and the Israeli-Jordanian frontier—there have been sudden and alarming crises. In Australia a second British atomic test has been carried out with apparent success.

### The Two Parties

OBSERVERS of the two conferences at Margate must have been struck by the contrast between Labour disunity and Conservative unity. That was a genuine contrast, and of course there are still differences of principle between the most radical Tory and the most moderate Socialist. But in one respect the contrast between the two gatherings was more artificial than real. There may have been a time when Labour was the party of the manual worker and Conservatism the political creed

and instrument of "the very few." But that time has passed and neither party can now escape from the fact that it is national, or from the necessity to behave accordingly. No one should therefore be taken in by the sartorial differences which still tend to be flaunted. Socialists may revel in their unpressed suits and knitted ties; Tories may prefer to appear in their Sunday best. But the people underneath are much the same.

### Democracy in Action

SOCIALISTS are never tired of saying that their conference makes policy, whereas the Conservatives' has no effective power and only exists to applaud the leaders and hear what they have decided. This is a gross misrepresentation. Whatever may be laid down in the respective constitutions, there is plenty of evidence that Conservative Conferences since the war have influenced the development of policy. The outstanding example of this was at Blackpool in 1950, when "the platform" gave way to clamour from "the floor" and agreed to the target of 300,000 houses. Those who witnessed that memorable scene will always think of it as a supreme instance of democracy in action.

But of course it is quite unfitting that policy should be decided, as of right, by a large and miscellaneous gathering. The Labour Party nullifies in practice the powers which belong to its conference in theory, because to the leaders of the party is left the responsibility for deciding when and how to implement policy. The Conservative method, though no more democratic—that would be undesirable—is certainly no less so, and it has the further merit that it is free from hypocrisy.

### The Bevanite Vote

THERE can be very little doubt that Mr. Attlee is still the trusted leader of the Socialists, and that he will retain that position until he chooses to retire. His deputy, Mr. Morrison, who was swept off the Executive last year by the Bevanite landslide, has now returned to it *ex officio*; and he is a very skilful and experienced politician. But Mr. Bevan has emerged once again as the favourite of the constituency parties, and the latter have proved their loyalty to his form of Socialism by returning every one of his colleagues whom they elected last year, and by keeping out Mr. Gaitskell.

It is easy to make light of this constituency vote, and to point to the strong countervailing weight of the trade union representation on the Executive. But we believe Mr. Bevan's chances of becoming leader of the party are as good as ever. There can be no denying his personal ascendancy in the Labour movement; unlike some of his rivals he has the temperament of a leader, and he has the faculty for oversimplifying issues which is so important in a demagogue. If he became leader, and



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if under his leadership the Labour Party were returned to power, he would inevitably disappoint the extremists who are now supporting him. He knows that he would not be able to push through grandiose schemes of nationalization in face of trade union opposition; and the union leaders know he knows. Behind the conflict there may therefore already be the makings of a realistic understanding.

### New School of Left-wing Intellectuals

**T**RADE unionists are not the only element in the Labour Party opposed to nationalization. Intellectuals are now turning against a policy which in the first place was "sold" to the trade union movement by intellectuals. One very courageous speech at Margate was made by Mr. C. A. R. Crosland, a young economist and M.P. for South Gloucestershire. After saying ritualistically that the principle of nationalization was not in dispute, he went on to mention all the unsolved problems which were bedevilling industries already nationalized, and he reminded the conference that it was necessary to convince floating voters of the superior merits of public ownership. In his own constituency, he said, there was a large aircraft firm (the Bristol Aeroplane Company). Was he to rebuke the aircraft industry by saying: "Only two world records in three weeks. Nationalize it?" He also made the valuable point that public control could at times be more effectively exercised over a privately owned firm than over a nationalized industry.

Speeches of this kind are a healthy sign; but it should not be supposed that Socialists become innocuous when they abandon nationalization. They have yet to rid themselves of the poison of class-consciousness and social vindictiveness; and in that respect they have still a long way to go.

### Reactions to Different Leaders

**A**T the Conservative Conference more attention than usual was paid to personalities, and the reasons for this are obvious. But the precise reactions of the delegates to different leaders, though these too were obvious enough to anyone present, were not perhaps reported with sufficient care by the Press as a whole. The public was thus given to understand, and rightly, that Mr. Eden's reception was quite out of the ordinary; but it was not so clearly stated that Mr. Butler received an equal measure of applause when he spoke on the afternoon of the first day. Lord Salisbury, on the other hand, after his excellent speech on foreign affairs, sat down to the accompaniment of rather half-hearted clapping. Most reports suggested that he was loudly applauded, as indeed he should have been, but this did not in fact occur.

Another misunderstanding concerns Sir Winston Churchill. Through

politeness or wishful thinking the impression was widely given that he was in his "usual form" when he addressed the Conference. This was certainly true of the matter of his speech, which was as good as ever; but the manner in which it was delivered was that of a tired man. Sir Winston's voice lacked resonance and at times became almost inaudible; and when he had finished he was unable to visit the overflow meeting where he was eagerly expected.

### **Tactful Reference to the Trade Unions**

**T**HE Prime Minister's evident fatigue in no way impaired—if anything it enhanced—the effect of his speech. One of the wisest and most tactful passages related to the trade unions. These, said Sir Winston,

must play an important part in our national life. We are not seeking to bring them into the Conservative Party, but we are asking . . . all Conservative wage-earners to join trade unions and take an effective part in their daily work. I have often said that the trade unions should keep clear of both parties and devote themselves solely to industrial matters. At the present time, however, I must admit they are doing very useful work where they are in restraining the featherheads, crackpots, vote-catchers and office-seekers from putting the folly they talk into action.

At the Labour Conference Mr. Tom O'Brien, as fraternal delegate from the T.U.C., had seemed to suggest that there might in certain circumstances be a separation between the party and the trade unions; and he had been severely taken to task by Mr. Arthur Deakin. Sir Winston kept himself aloof from this controversy and indicated that he had confidence in the patriotism and good sense of the unions, whether or not they maintained their formal relationship with the Labour Party. Even the nastiest-minded shop stewards will have difficulty in making capital out of that.

### **The Problem of Rent**

**N**OW that the Conservative house-building programme has virtually succeeded, there is no excuse for shirking the problem of repairs and the cognate problem of rent. Mr. Macmillan, the Minister of Housing, was disarmingly frank as to his reason for shirking these problems so far. He said at Margate that he had found in his office "skeletons marked 'Local Government Reform,' 'Housing Subsidies,' 'Rating and Valuation' and 'Rent Restrictions,'" which were "dusted and paraded before every Minister when he took office," but he had decided to defer dealing with them to concentrate on the housing drive. This explanation would be readily acceptable if we could be sure that Mr. Macmillan



"Shall we, shan't we?"

intended to take action now, but his own speech was not absolutely clear on this point. The Prime Minister was more encouraging when he said :

We are well aware of the responsibility which falls upon us for the maintenance and improvement of houses which the conditions of war and war-time rent restrictions have robbed of their natural means of renewal. We must not be deterred from tackling this problem because of the prejudice excited by the word " landlord." . . .

And he added that the work of slum clearance, for which the pre-war Tory Government could claim credit, must be actively resumed.

We trust that the Queen's speech will foreshadow specific measures for tackling the problems of rent, repairs and slum clearance, and that these will be carried through whatever the attitude of the Opposition.

### G.A.T.T.

EVERY year, at the Conservative Party Conference, there is either a resolution or an amendment urging that Great Britain should withdraw from, or seek drastically to amend, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, usually known as G.A.T.T. The speeches on this subject are always received with rapturous applause and the receptions given to Mr. Leo Amery and Lord Balfour of Inchrye at Margate this year revealed very clearly how strongly the average Conservative feels on this subject. Unfortunately it must be confessed that this enthusiasm is matched by a corresponding ignorance of the issues which are involved.

We are privileged in the current issue to print an article by Mrs. Spearman of the Conservative Research Department entitled "The Truth about G.A.T.T." Mrs. Spearman has expounded the main principles of G.A.T.T. with exemplary clarity, and she comes to the conclusion that the United Kingdom "has not suffered" through the series of tariff negotiations which have been conducted at the annual sessions of the contracting parties. She also gives cogent reasons for her view that G.A.T.T. has had very little practical effect upon the United Kingdom's trading position since 1948. She concludes her article by reminding readers that, if Empire Free Trade were ever a practical possibility, it would not in itself conflict with our obligations under G.A.T.T.—a neat reply to Lord Beaverbrook and the propaganda of "Crusader in Chains."

G.A.T.T. is a difficult question on which to form a conclusive judgment, but there can be no doubt that many of its strongest opponents very greatly overstate their case. And those of us who believe that absolute Free Trade is for the time being unattainable and undesirable, and that tariffs are certainly no less vital to the Sterling Area than they are to the American economy, will be more likely to establish our point if we argue temperately and with strict regard for the facts.

### The Cause of Peace

SIR WINSTON'S remarks on Europe were deliberately controversial, and were not very well received in France. He hinted that if the French failed to ratify E.D.C. it would be necessary to bring the Germans into direct relationship with N.A.T.O. Apart from the need for more manpower in the Atlantic alliance there is also the economic argument; (Mr. Eden mentioned the German export threat in an aside during his speech). Much as we may dislike the idea of German rearmament, it appears now to be inescapable. The French would do well to take Sir Winston's advice, though M. André Stibio, in his article on a later page, suggests that no decision is likely until after the Presidential election in December.

Perhaps the greatest moment in the Prime Minister's speech was near the end, when he said:

If I stay it is because I have the feeling that I may, through things that have happened, have an influence on what I care about above all else—the building of a sure and lasting peace.

What a masterpiece of understatement—"through things that have happened"! One day people may appreciate to the full the gallantry of this tired old man, whose desire to bring peace to the world is so much stronger than his own desire to be quiet and free from responsibility.

### May 11 Suggestion Not Dead

BUT what has become of the proposal, which he made in the House of Commons on May 11, that there should be an informal meeting of the Russian and Western leaders, with no fixed agenda? Sir Winston said reassuringly that the idea was not dead, though he admitted that he had not been able to persuade "our trusted allies" (in this case presumably the Americans) to accept it. Since then Mr. Eden, M. Bidault and Mr. Dulles have met in London, and have sent another invitation to the Russians to come and discuss Germany and Austria at Lugano. Perhaps, if the answer to this is again negative, Sir Winston may feel that the more limited and circumscribed method of approach has been proved worthless, and he may then be in a position either to bring the Americans into line with his original proposal, or to take the initiative himself without prejudice to Anglo-American solidarity.

### Why Does Eisenhower Hesitate?

OF course the former of these two results would be much the more satisfactory; and we cannot see what reasons President Eisenhower can have for hesitating. If he agreed to meet Malenkov he would have to

## THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

reckon with strong opposition and even vilification from the McCarthyite wing of his own party; but he cannot surely allow his policy to be dominated by that irresponsible faction. In making an attempt to break the world deadlock he would have the support of Congress and, we are convinced, of the American people. He could also use his great popular appeal to counteract the influence of extremists and to convince those who are haunted by memories of Yalta that he would not give away any vital American interests.

### Churchill on his Own; A War-time Precedent

**B**UT if he refuses to make the attempt, and to take the risks involved, why should not the British Prime Minister meet Malenkov on his own? It should not be forgotten that Mr. Churchill (as he then was) visited Moscow and "got to grips" with Stalin in the summer of 1942—over a year before the Teheran Conference which Roosevelt attended. It could be argued that Russia and Britain were allies in 1942, while the U.S.A. was still a neutral; but we are sure that, even then, the Prime Minister would not have gone to Moscow if he had thought his visit was inconsistent with his duty to the English-speaking partnership. That is still the position to-day, though our connection with America is now technically closer. There could be no question of Churchill saying anything, or agreeing to anything, which would damage Anglo-American relations. But his personal intervention (if his health were equal to the strain) "might do good and could not easily do much harm." If it failed, then the world would know that the Russians were unwilling to come to terms, and the Cold War would have to continue. But it might succeed. . . .

### The Suez Negotiations

**B**EFORE the Party Conference there had been rumours in the Press of an impending agreement between Britain and Egypt over the Canal Zone, and from some of these it appeared that we were about to surrender our position there. Alarm was therefore expressed at the conference, notably by Mr. Julian Amery, who was loudly applauded when he said that no agreement would be better than a bad agreement. Lord Salisbury, replying, made it quite clear that the Government did not intend to "scuttle", and he also showed how inaccurate had been the unofficial rumours and reports upon which public misgivings were founded. "Actually," he said,

We have not yet reached agreement . . . on general principles and I am by no means certain we shall. After that there will be many questions of detail upon which negotiations may break down.



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He did not conceal the economic and other advantages to us of an agreement which would enable us to reduce our commitment in the Canal Zone, and would contribute to goodwill in the Middle East. But the strategic importance of the Canal base, and the commercial importance of the Canal itself, were such that we could not afford to leave either in unfriendly or incompetent hands.

There is obviously a point beyond which we cannot go. . . . If the Egyptian Government cannot come so far to meet us we shall have to face the necessity of a permanent continuation of the present position.

Mr. Eden thoroughly endorsed these remarks.

### American Support?

ON October 21 a communiqué was issued by the British Embassy in Cairo to the effect that agreement in principle had still not been reached between the two Governments. There can therefore be no doubt that our Government is determined to stand firm, and we trust that it is receiving moral and diplomatic support from the Americans. The latter can hardly wonder at our interest in Suez when they consider their own interest in Panama. Nor can they forget that, in order to safeguard that interest, they were compelled to behave in a manner which must have appeared high-handed.

### Analogy of Panama

AT the beginning of this century the American Government had purchased the rights and property of the French Panama Canal Company and had negotiated with Colombia a treaty for the cession of the territory through which the Canal was to be cut. But the Colombian Government failed to ratify this treaty. So in 1903 the United States recognized the break-away Government of Panama and signed the necessary treaty with it in 1904. This action was not in accordance with the attitude towards secession which had been held to justify the victorious party in the American Civil War; but the United States Government has never shown itself to be embarrassed by considerations of logic or strict legality when vital American interests have been at stake.

Of course the analogy between Panama and Suez is by no means perfect. Our Government does not own, it merely has a share in, the Suez Canal Company; and our occupation of the Canal Zone rests upon a treaty, though it is a treaty which the Egyptians have denounced and we are breaking. These are important differences, but we feel all the same that there is a basic similarity between the two cases; and we suggest that the Americans should remember their own conduct in regard to Panama when they are deciding whether or not to support us over Suez.

### Private Secretary to the Queen

IT has been announced that Sir Alan Lascelles will retire from the post of Private Secretary to the Queen at the end of this year, and that he will be succeeded by Sir Michael Adeane. Sir Alan has been a devoted servant of the Royal Family, and his great intelligence has been admired by all the important people with whom he has had to deal, though it has inevitably been concealed from the general public. Sir Michael is the grandson of Lord Stamfordham, and he could have no better example to guide him in his new office. We wish him well and we hope that under his direction the Royal Secretariat will undergo a subtle change and be brought completely up to date.

### A Commonwealth Post

BY this we mean that it should consist of gifted officials from every part of the Commonwealth. Sir Michael Adeane will himself, like his predecessors, be a citizen of the United Kingdom; but his duty is to the Queen as Head of the Commonwealth, and his department should be organized and staffed accordingly. We have said before that we trust the Court as a whole will evolve during the new reign, and that it will become a Commonwealth Court rather than a predominantly United Kingdom Court, as it is at present. In this process the evolution of the Secretariat will be of outstanding importance.

### Postscript

WE have refrained from comment on Trieste and British Guiana, because as we go to press the full facts are not yet known. It seems to us, however, that the former provides a good example of the need for consistency in foreign affairs; and the latter a good illustration of the maxim that prevention is better than cure.

# LESSONS OF STRASBOURG

By SIR EDWARD BOYLE, Bt.

**I**N August 1949 the Council of Europe at Strasbourg was front-page news. Mr. Churchill, it may be remembered, addressed the first meeting of the Consultative Assembly, and harangued cheering crowds in the Place Kleber in his best French. One of his colleagues went so far as to forecast that

future historians will agree that this meeting of the Council of Europe was the turning-point of the twentieth century.

Yet to-day, the vast majority of British people know—and care—very little about the work of an institution which, when they trouble to think of it at all, they decidedly mistrust. Its proceedings are seldom given prominence in the daily Press, while it is very rare for a member of either Front Bench to refer to the Council of Europe in a public speech. Moreover, when the House of Commons discussed the work of the Council of Europe on Friday, October 23, this was the first Parliamentary debate on this subject since October 1950.

Why does the Council of Europe attract so little attention to-day? In the first place, it is an unfortunate consequence of mass politics and universal suffrage that any political institution, however valuable, which transcends party political divisions tends to be ignored. The proceedings at Strasbourg are only reported at any length in the British Press when there is a clash between Conservative and Socialist representatives, or an apparent “split” in either of their ranks. But a more important reason why the Council of Europe tends to be overlooked to-

day is that representatives themselves no longer use the brave words of 1949. They are themselves losing faith in their power, as members of the Consultative Assembly, to influence the course of European affairs.

In 1948 and 1949—the period which immediately followed the rape of Prague and the Berlin blockade—the ideal of “European Union” was, as it were, in the air; and many who were prepared to lend their support to this ideal had very diverse notions of what it entailed. Thus at the first meeting of the Council of Europe there were those like M. Spaak, the first President of the Consultative Assembly, who believed in a federal solution; and there was Mr. Churchill, who refused to commit himself to any particular solution and commended the remark of Napoleon that constitutions should be “short and obscure.” But everyone at that first meeting was agreed on one point; whatever solution came finally to be adopted, the Council of Europe should play a paramount role. Sir Robert Boothby, in a speech last September which he described as his “swan song” in the Consultative Assembly, quoted some words which he himself had spoken in August 1949:

I feel most strongly that in this Assembly and in the Committee of Ministers we have the instruments with which an organic European Union can be forged. Why should we seek to replace them? . . . One day, I hope we shall find that the Committee has in fact become the Cabinet of Europe, and that this Assembly has in fact become the Parliament of Europe. Then European union will have been achieved.

Personally, for reasons which I will

later explain, I do not regret that this ideal has not been realized. But I quote these words primarily in order to contrast the aspirations of 1949 with the realities of to-day.

During the years which followed 1949, it became increasingly clear that there was a fundamental divergence of aim between those whose idea of European Union envisaged some kind of super-government, and those who were not prepared to go beyond the comfortable ambiguities of "close association." By 1951 two major projects had been launched by European statesmen which entailed some pooling of sovereignty. First, in 1950, there was the Schuman Plan; and secondly, in 1951, there was the proposal for a European Defence Community.

As is well known, the "Eden proposals" of March 1952 were directed towards ensuring that the Council of Europe's institutions should form the framework of the institutions of the Coal and Steel Community. But in fact the institutions of the European Coal and Steel Community differ from those of the Council of Europe in one very material respect. The Coal and Steel Assembly is no mere consultative body, but is empowered to exercise full Parliamentary control over the Coal and Steel High Authority. Thus the members of this Assembly enjoy a direct measure of authority which is not shared by their colleagues at Strasbourg. With regard to European Defence, the important point is that the European Defence Community entailed not only a partial pooling of sovereignty like the Schuman Plan, but also an element of democratic control, and thus led inevitably to the project for a European Political Community.

One of the most dramatic events in the history of the Council of Europe was the resignation of M. Spaak

from the Presidency in December 1951. Sir David Maxwell Fyfe had explained on behalf of the newly elected British Conservative Government that it would be impossible for Britain ever to transfer governmental functions to a European federal body; and that Britain could only seek European unity within the context of Atlantic union. M. Spaak's reply was savage:

Never have you been more categorical and more clear in telling us, although you knew how much it meant to us to build Europe, "We will never go along with you; not along this road nor in this direction." If we follow the line of Conservative or Labour England we shall not be rebuilding Europe—we shall be renouncing it.

Since that date, M. Spaak has devoted all his energies towards building up the European Community of Six, that is to say, the super-government of France, Western Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries. At the most recent session of the Council of Europe, M. Spaak presented a Report, and opened a five-day debate on "The definition of the policy of the Council of Europe in the light of recent developments in the international situation"; and Sir Robert Boothby pointed out with some justice that, both in his report and in his speech, M. Spaak seemed to regard a United Europe and the European Political Community as synonymous. But it is undeniably true that, in the words of the B.B.C. correspondent, Mr. Kenneth Matthews, "impetus towards European unity [has] been transferred to the institutions of the Six"; and this impetus has been yet further accelerated by the result of the recent Western German elections.

The progress towards the achievement of an E.P.C. is a fact, whether we like it or not, and the questions which

## LESSONS OF STRASBOURG

I wish to answer during the remainder of this article are not concerned with whether or not the E.P.C. will prove a good thing for Britain. My purpose is rather to consider the present position of the Council of Europe, and to ask, first, whether this Parliament of fifteen nations, of which such high hopes were entertained four years ago, still has a useful part to play; and secondly, whether British representatives should support any move for strengthening the authority of its institutions.

My answer to the first of these questions is, very definitely, in the affirmative. I certainly should not wish to claim that all the activities of the Council of Europe are equally valuable. For example I am, myself, somewhat sceptical about the elaborate reports produced by the Committee on Human Rights, and I cannot feel any special interest in the design which has been accepted for a Council of Europe flag. None the less, it did seem to me, as a newcomer to Strasbourg, that the Consultative Assembly was a quite invaluable forum for the exchange of opinions by European Parliamentary representatives. It is one thing to read accounts of debates in Foreign Parliaments which are reported briefly on the Foreign Affairs page of *The Times*; it is quite another thing to be able to listen to representatives from fifteen nations, and to comprehend at first hand both the issues on which they feel most keenly and the fundamental beliefs on which their opinions are based. At the same time it is no less valuable for Continental politicians to have the opportunity of hearing a definitive exposition of British policy. Many representatives at Strasbourg are somewhat confused by the different points of view of the British representatives, both Conservative and Labour, and it was remarkable to note the effect of Mr. Nutting's pronouncement at the recent Session that Britain

stood absolutely four-square behind the E.D.C.

I believe, too, that the Committees are of the very greatest value in the opportunities which they give for the exchange of ideas. I, myself, substituted for Sir Robert Boothby as a Member of the Economic Committee and two points specially impressed me. The first was the vital importance to the smaller European countries of the liberalization of European trade. The second was the widespread fear that all the progress towards liberalization which had been achieved through the institution of the European Payments Union might be undone by a sudden and premature attempt at sterling convertibility. I should add that the value of the Committees of the Council of Europe is very greatly enhanced by the admirable work of the Secretariat. Representatives have been known to complain that their lockers tend to be filled with too much unnecessary—and unreadable—material, but the fact remains that many of the historical and economic surveys and collections of documents, which are prepared by the Secretariat, are of real and lasting value.

But should British representatives support any move for strengthening the authority of the Council of Europe's institutions? Here, I must confess, I am far more doubtful. Certainly I am all for the closest possible relations between the Council of Europe and other European organizations such as the O.E.E.C. Thus I fully agreed with those who regretted that a representative from O.E.E.C. did not open the recent debate in the Consultative Assembly on the O.E.E.C.'s Fifth Annual Report to the Council of Europe. But I am afraid I cannot share Sir Robert Boothby's regret that the Committee of Ministers has shown no signs of becoming the Cabinet of Europe, nor the Assembly



the Parliament of Europe. I do not believe it would ever be feasible for a "Cabinet of Europe" to frame a policy on such subjects as economic affairs for the fifteen nations as a whole. After all, their economies are in many respects competitive rather than complementary, and the position of Great Britain as banker for the Sterling Area is wholly different from that of any other nation represented at Strasbourg. Nor is there any effective answer to Sir David Maxwell Fyfe's unambiguous declaration, to which I have already referred, that it is impossible for Great Britain ever to join any Continental organization which entails some pooling of sovereignty. There is little need for me to dwell on this point, but I still do not see how the aspirations of Sir Robert Boothby—and many others—could ever have been fulfilled without involving Britain in certain arrangements which would have been rejected by an overwhelming majority

of the British electorate.

I cannot help feeling that all those who still believe that the Council of Europe constitutes in some sense an alternative to the European Political Community, are obsessed by two fears. They fear the political consequences of a European federation dominated by Germany; and they fear the economic consequences of Britain's export trade becoming ground between the upper and nether millstones of the dollar area and greatly increased German competition. Both of these are very reasonable fears, but it is no good becoming unrealistic in our attempts to overcome them. The truth is that the Council of Europe, however valuable as an institution, can never be a short cut to the solution of those most urgent problems, both political and economic, with which Britain is now faced.

EDWARD BOYLE.

## FRANCE: ANOTHER 1788?

By ANDRÉ STIBIO

THE political situation in France is more than usually complex now that Parliament has reassembled. The special powers, which were given to M. Joseph Laniel alone of post-war Prime Ministers, expired on October 1, and he has had the difficult task of justifying the use which he has made of them. In December M. Vincent Auriol's term as President of the Republic will be coming to an end, and if he persists in his determination not to stand again a successor to him will be elected at Versailles (by both Houses of Parliament in joint session). This important contest has a bearing upon the general state of politics, and it adds appreciably

to the uncertainty which at present prevails.

Both in foreign affairs (which are dominated by the E.D.C. Treaty problem) and in home affairs (where the unexpected strikes in August have left a dangerous atmosphere) France is confronted by the need to take decisions; to choose a definite course instead of endlessly vacillating. But it is by no means certain that a majority can be found in the National Assembly to support any clear and consistent programme.

As already mentioned, M. Joseph Laniel has been required to prove that he did not misuse or abuse the special



powers which he was lucky enough to obtain from the Assembly, after the long crisis that followed the downfall of the René Mayer Government. He began, it will be remembered, by provoking a storm. Before his first decrees had even been issued the civil servants went on strike, because they thought their rights, and in particular their rights on retirement, were threatened. The next to strike were the railwaymen, and soon the whole public sector of the economy was at a standstill. This formidable development, which was not altogether free from anarchist symptoms, was in the main syndicalist, professional and political. Syndicalist, because it afforded an opportunity for the essentially Socialist *Force Ouvrière* movement in the trade unions to challenge the influence of the Communist C.G.T. Professional, because it was a revolt by employees who are in many cases seriously underpaid—often at the rate of less than 20,000 francs (£20 7s. 11d.) a month—against the luxury enjoyed by others who are sheltered by an inequitable tax system. And political, because as the strike proceeded other objectives became apparent; the strike was clearly being used to bring into power a new Left-wing coalition, excluding the Communists, under the name “democratic and social front”.

Such was the development with which M. Laniel had to deal, and he faced up to it with the stolidity of a countryman, but with a marked lack of psychological finesse. Almost simultaneously he had to tackle the problem of Indo-China, to improve the political climate in Tunisia by appointing a new Resident-General, and also, with the help of MM. Georges Bidault and Paul Reynaud, to cut the Gordian knot in Morocco by deposing the Sultan. It is very much to his credit that he managed to maintain his strength of mind and purpose while

so many long-deferred problems were falling upon him all at once.

In spite of the agreements painfully negotiated with the trade unions, thanks to the good offices of the M.R.P., in spite of the raising of the lowest salaries and the appointment of a commission to fix a minimum figure for salaries, the Laniel Government's first decrees earned for it the epithet “reactionary” which, unjust though it may be, is now used against it with equal relish by the Socialists and the Communists. Social unrest remains, and in their desire to prevent another paroxysm M. Laniel and his Finance Minister, M. Edgar Faure, have like M. Antoine Pinay before them, taken measures to reduce prices, and to promote economic expansion. M. Faure has also prepared a smaller Budget than last year's, as an antidote to inflation, and the Government's decrees have facilitated administrative reforms which were long overdue. In other words, M. Laniel has achieved positive results in the social, financial and economic spheres, and though there are some aspects of his work which have not been successful, nobody could accuse his Government of the “immobilism” which has damned so many of its predecessors. A new direction has been given to the war in Indo-China, self-government has been granted to the Associated States there, and French policy in North Africa has been rescued from the quagmire into which it had fallen. In these tasks the Prime Minister has no doubt been greatly helped by his friend and adviser, M. Paul Reynaud, whose presence is of special value in an otherwise rather ill-assorted Ministry. M. Laniel's team is brilliant and public-spirited, but it is torn between its Left and Right wings, and the Prime Minister has had to spend much of his time patching up (or failing to patch up) personal differences.

It is now, alas, a well-established tradition in France to ask at the beginning of each new parliamentary session: Will the Government of the day survive or will it fall? M. Laniel's Government is no exception to the rule. So many vested interests have been injured by its decrees—civil servants on the one hand, farmers on the other, and many more besides—that the Government's life is obviously in danger. Since the Liberation the conception of the State has been so weakened and parliamentary life so degraded that the vested interests to which I have referred have their champions in every party. In the normal course of events M. Laniel could therefore expect to be assailed, and probably overthrown, without very much delay.

But the present state of affairs is far from normal, and one extraordinary factor which may perhaps help to postpone a ministerial crisis is the presidential election in December. This "event" stimulates ambitions, among parties as well as among individuals, which might suffer from an immediate change of government.

M. Vincent Auriol's seven-year term is coming to an end, and it can fairly be said that, in face of almost universal doubt at the outset, he has given some element of stability to the Fourth Republic. The latter has had to compete with undeniable faults in its constitution, and the vigorous and well-founded criticisms of General de Gaulle. At the time of its birth no one would have given much for its chances of survival. But M. Auriol nursed it and supported its first faltering steps, so that it has somehow managed to survive. He has refused to adopt the purely representative character of Presidents under the Third Republic; he has sought to exercise power by means of influence, and his influence has grown in proportion to the inexperience



M. VINCENT AURIOL

of Prime Ministers, the frequency of ministerial crises, and the division of political forces. His most serious adversary was Gaullism, at the time when that movement was making great gains in the country. But he contrived, when he called upon M. Pinay to form a government, to drive a wedge into the Gaullist parliamentary group and thus before long caused a decisive split. Finally, it should be noticed that M. Auriol is President of the French Union (or Commonwealth), President of the Supreme Council of the Magistracy, and President of the National Defence Committee, as well as President of the Republic. He has therefore a field of influence which is worthy of his active, energetic and optimistic nature.

If he agreed to stand for a second term, he would have a better chance than any other candidate, in spite of Gaullist opposition. But he has a very natural desire to rest and travel, and he has publicly and repeatedly stated that he will not stand again. Never-

theless some people continue to think that, if no other candidate seems likely to win enough support, M. Auriol may after all defer to the wishes of his friends. That is a possibility, but meanwhile the contest has begun on the understanding that he will be out of the running.

The contest has begun in the sense that there are already a number of candidates whose interest is officially or unofficially known. None of these will have a walk-over, and their chances are hard to assess. Among the Independents three names are being much discussed; M. Antoine Pinay, M. Louis Jacquinot, and the Prime Minister himself, M. Laniel. M. Pinay recently declared in Canada that on no account would he be a candidate; and it is indeed true that he would have against him all the Socialists and most of the M.R.P. He does not believe in fighting a hopeless battle, and he may therefore prefer to bide his time until his services are once again required as Prime Minister. M. Jacquinot is a young, but experienced, politician, who was trained in the school of Poincaré and Maginot. He has personal well-wishers both on the Right and on the Left, and his recent marriage has been interpreted as further proof of his desire to go to the Elysée. He has held the Ministry of Marine and is at present Minister for Overseas Territories, but he has the serious disqualification that he has never been Prime Minister. Of the three Independents M. Laniel would seem, therefore, to have the best chance, if only because of the massive vote which he obtained in the Assembly at the time of his investiture. But since then there have been the decrees and the strikes, and his competitors are no doubt hoping that if he is left with the responsibility for government his presidential hopes (if any) will be blasted.

This calculation may save him from defeat in the Assembly, at any rate until December. And his credit may in fact have suffered less than his rivals think.

The Radicals are very anxious to recapture the Elysée from the Socialists (M. Auriol was a Socialist) and they have on their side the considerable influence of M. Edouard Herriot, President of the Assembly, and M. Gaston Monnerville, President of the Council of the Republic. For one reason or another, neither of these is himself a candidate; and the two names put forward are those of M. Henri Queuille and M. Yvon Delbos. Both men have had long careers in politics; the latter is a strong believer in E.D.C., the former an expert in the art of handling men, and of a conciliatory disposition, but troubled with uncertain health. The Radicals are strongly placed in an election which calls for a compromise between Right and Left.

From the M.R.P. comes M. Georges Bidault, who could probably count upon strong support from the Gaullists. He is an able man, who is capable of showing firmness (as in the Moroccan crisis) and flexibility (as in his approach to the E.D.C. question); he is also pre-eminently a patriot. M. René Pleven is still mentioned, and he is most favoured by the Socialists. Other names, too, are being canvassed, and there will no doubt be more before the issue is decided. But, on the whole, if M. Auriol can really be counted out, the most likely party would seem to be the Radical Party, and the most likely candidates, of all parties, MM. Queuille Bidault and Laniel. Meanwhile, as I have said, this contest may serve to prolong the Laniel Government's life.

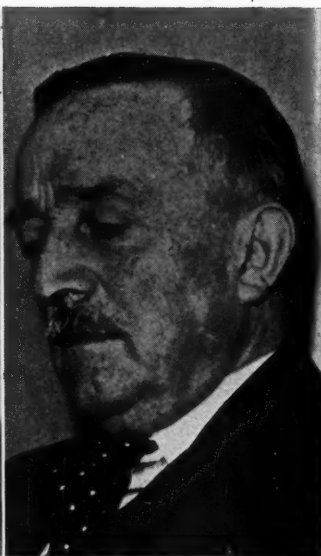
But the decrees, the social unrest, and the prospect of a disputed election for the Presidency, are not the only themes which dominate French politics at the



M. GEORGES BIDAULT



M. JOSEPH LANIEL



M. HENRI QUEUILLE

moment. There is also, in foreign affairs, the question of European integration, and in particular of E.D.C.; and in home affairs the question whether or not a new "popular front" is in the making, and whether or not such a front could obtain the necessary backing in the Assembly. As regards the European Army little progress has in fact been made, despite appearances. Ratification of the E.D.C. Treaty is very far from being a foregone conclusion, and it is a matter which not only divides the nation, but parties and groups within the nation. Among the Independents, for instance, M. Pinay is in favour of ratification, M. Pierre André against it, and many are undecided. Among the Radicals a similar cleavage is apparent; M. Edouard Daladier is resolutely hostile, M. Herriot insists upon certain qualifying formulæ, while M. Delbos pleads for the European Army, ably and enthusiastically supported by M. René Mayer. Two of the M.R.P. leaders are "Euro-

pean"—M. Robert Schuman, the former Foreign Minister, and M. Pierre-Henri Teitgen—but M. Bidault takes a much more doubtful view, and his attitude is approved by most of the Gaullists, who are implacable opponents of the European Army. A recent statement at Strasbourg by M. Guy Mollet made it seem possible that the Socialists might be resigning themselves to the idea of ratification. But in the Socialist Party resistance to the Treaty is still very strong; M. Jules Moch, M. Daniel Mayer, M. Max Lejeune and M. Naegelen are its chief antagonists, and anyway it would be necessary to summon a Party Conference to decide upon the issue.

If, therefore, the Government brings E.D.C. to the test of a debate in the Assembly, the fate of the Treaty may turn upon a few votes. But such a show-down would threaten first the Government, then the various parties, with disruption. This means that there is a strong temptation to play for time,

to delay until more is known of the chances of a Four-Power meeting, since most of those who oppose E.D.C. do so in the hope that there will be comprehensive negotiations between East and West. What action will M. Laniel take? Will he rush the question of ratification? If he does, his Government will be in immediate danger and a major crisis will follow. Or will he wait until just after the presidential election? Whatever happens, France cannot evade the question; a choice must sooner or later be made, and that choice will produce a serious political shock and maybe a drastic realignment of political forces.

Such a realignment has been in the thoughts of many people ever since the Socialists started talking of a "social and democratic front." M. Mendès-France, white hope of the Left-wing intellectuals, brought that line of speculation "officially" into being when he so nearly won the investiture as Prime Minister earlier this year. The narrowness of his defeat caused general surprise, because his speech to the Assembly was rigorous and painfully precise; its central theme being that France could not retreat from the decisions which had to be taken in respect of her finances, her internal economy, defence expenditure, Indo-China and North Africa. His programme was that of a Radical, but an independent Radical with many ideas of his own, and it found favour with a large section of the Left.

M. Mendès-France recurred to his theme at the Radical Party Conference at Aix-les-Bains. And he used this striking phrase: "We are in 1788." He was suggesting that those who are unduly privileged under the present system are, by their blindness, inviting a revolution; and that the only way for them to avoid revolution is to agree to fundamental reforms before it is too



M. MENDÈS-FRANCE

late. These opinions are causing a stir, but it remains to be seen if they will bring about a shifting of the parliamentary majority from Right to Left. For my own part, I am not convinced that they will. The Radicals have been showing their sensitiveness to social problems, but they have not officially joined the "democratic front" which the Socialists have proposed. And the Assembly will definitely not support a coalition which would be likely to encourage Communist agitation.

Nevertheless, there is now an undeniable tendency towards the Left, which adds to the prevailing uncertainty. There is doubt in foreign affairs, doubt about the presidential election, anxiety concerning the nation's strength and the anarchical effects of trade union rivalry. Yet another element of uncertainty is General de Gaulle and his People's Rally, which he has now himself abandoned as an organization



within the existing Constitution. France has been suffering from too much equivocation, and we can only hope that the new presidential term will be the signal for those vital decisions, in

every field of policy, of which M. Mendès-France has spoken. For if France cannot make up her mind, events will impose their own solution.

ANDRÉ STIBIO.

## THE H-BOMB: FACT AND FICTION

By DENYS SMITH

**I**F we imagine a group of scientists arguing hotly about the shape of some prehistoric monster when all the evidence they have is a small section of shin-bone, we have a close parallel to the divergent statements made about Russia's atomic development. The hard core of knowledge on which the different conclusions are based is of much the same order of magnitude. Normal Russian secrecy is magnified many times when it comes to Russian atomic progress. Hence it is quite possible for a man with full knowledge of the small amount of available fact, such as Harry Truman, to doubt that the Soviets have developed a real "deliverable" atom bomb at all, while others paint alarming pictures of Russia with stocks of hydrogen bombs ready to dump on Detroit and Pittsburgh at ten o'clock to-morrow morning.

There is a great deal of difference between "testing a hydrogen bomb" and "conducting a hydrogen bomb test." The first implies that you actually have made a hydrogen bomb capable of being carried and dropped on to its target. The second that some test, contributing to the knowledge of making a deliverable bomb, had been made. The original confirmation of

the Russians' August 12 atomic explosion by the American Atomic Energy Commission did not say that Russia had "tested" a hydrogen bomb. The Commission often conceals and withholds facts, but it has never distorted them. If it believed that a hydrogen bomb capable of being carried by plane and dropped on an American target had been tested by the Russians it would have said so. But the conclusion that Russia had made a hydrogen bomb made better headlines in the Press. It also could further a number of very worthy objectives. The United States, though regarded in Europe as jittery about the prospects of war, has in actual fact been remarkably complacent about it. Having fought two wars without being attacked, it is hard for the average American to take the prospect of attack seriously. He feels about such warnings much as the British man in the street felt about warnings of invasion probabilities during the "phony war" period. As a result American civilian defence is in a deplorable condition of unpreparedness. Continued efforts have been made—but with little result—to shock the public out of its complacency by stressing the growing strength of Russia's bomber squadrons and the impos-



## THE H-BOMB: FACT AND FICTION

sibility of preventing some bombers breaking through an alert defence, let alone an ineffective one. To stress the danger of hydrogen bomb attacks to give the public a jolt was, therefore, a natural response of all interested in the civil defence question. The Armed Services, faced with budget cuts, have an interest in stressing the great progress made by Russia in the atomic and aviation fields. The Secretary of Defence, Mr. Wilson, trying to bring down the expenditures of his Department, despite pressure from the military professionals, had more interest in stating that it would be three years before there was a possibility of a Russian hydrogen bomb attack on American cities. There were demands in some quarters that the funds for the American atomic programme be increased, countered, though less vociferously, by suggestions that the mathematics of such a suggestion was a little like that of the farmer who tried to halve the time it would take to hatch eggs by using two broody hens. If 500 atomic bombs could do all the destruction needed there would be no increased security in having 1,000. The money could be better spent on defences against atomic attack such as the guided missile programme.

The confusion of tongues grew so that Eisenhower had to tell members of his Administration to make no more statements on the subject without first clearing them with the Atomic Energy Commission. In announcing this step the President also outlined the known facts about Russia's atomic development. Russia had produced an atomic explosion in 1949 and two more in 1951. The President carefully refrained from stating that Russia had "tested an atomic bomb", for that would have been an assumption. The hypothesis of an atomic explosion on top of a steel pylon would have conformed to

the known facts. The conclusion that Russia actually has developed a deliverable atomic bomb of the conventional type is a deduction. Then in August this year, said the President, the United States learned "through intelligence channels" that the Soviets had tested "an atomic device"—once again he avoided the word bomb—"in which some part of the explosive force had been derived from thermonuclear reaction." In layman's language this means that some of the explosive force was due to the fusion of hydrogen atoms and was not entirely due to the fission, or splitting, of plutonium or uranium atoms as in the conventional type of atomic explosion.

Always remembering that we have only a segment of shin-bone on which to base any deduction, it is interesting to note that the President spoke of "intelligence channels" providing information on the thermonuclear aspect of the atomic explosion. It is a general assumption that delicate instruments can detect an explosion the size of an atomic explosion, much as they detect an earthquake. So without relying on intelligence reports of any nature the United States would know when an atomic explosion had taken place. The intelligence reports disclosed that more than an ordinary atomic explosion had taken place. These intelligence reports might have been verbal, in which case the possibility of a "plant" or propaganda hoax could not be excluded. There might also have been reports based on collecting samples from the upper air and examining their contents. The clouds from American atomic explosions have spoiled photographic plates many hundreds of miles distant, so it can well be understood that the after-effects of an atomic explosion several thousand of miles away could be discovered by scientific means. If a

hydrogen bomb test had been made there would be more than a normal amount of gases formed by the fusion of the hydrogen compounds, for example, of helium, in the air samples tested. But even if the intelligence reports to which the President referred were scientific as opposed to verbal, the possibility of "faking" could not be excluded. The scientists could say there was more helium in their samples taken, say, from the Bering Sea than usual, but could not say with certainty that this was produced by a thermonuclear explosion. It could conceivably have been pumped, so to speak, into the atmosphere with the deliberate intent of deceiving.

But the deduction drawn by the President was not along any lines which could encourage the idea that the threat of Russian atomic attack was unreal. It was, on the contrary, that the Soviets possessed a stockpile of atomic weapons of conventional types and that the August 12 explosion meant they had produced or could produce a weapon of explosive power far in excess of conventional types.

The Atomic Energy Commission, assuming that the intelligence reports were accurate, has concluded that the Russian tests were similar to the American Eniwetok tests of 1951 and 1952. A minimum of information was given about these Eniwetok tests, but from collateral evidence they demonstrated that a conventional atom bomb could be held together long enough at sufficient heat to fuse hydrogen compounds. The earlier test probably proved this theoretically, and the second practically, by including some small amount of tritium, the hydrogen compound used in the device tested. The fact that this had fused could be determined by examination of air samples afterwards. The conclusion that only a small quantity of tritium

was used, like a little pepper being added to the devil's broth, is based on the known fact that the atomic reactors at Savannah River, South Carolina, which will make tritium, have only just come into operation.

Even after the President's statement, Mr. Cole, the Chairman of the Congressional Atomic Energy Committee, has been giving the alarm bell some extra hard tugs with his predictions that Russia would soon be making hydrogen bombs by the hundreds and even thousands. Predictions of this kind should be measured by the economics of the situation. An atomic programme constitutes a heavy drain not only of money, but of the things behind the money—materials, electric power and above all skilled personnel, particularly engineers. If they are siphoned away from the economy of the country in large quantities that economy would be weakened just as if it had suffered from an enemy attack. Moreover, even a police state cannot totally ignore the effect on the public of a continuing depressed standard of living. A wealthy country like the United States can have atom bombs and butter. The Soviets could only have them at the expense of butter and by thrusting the promises of a workers' paradise still further into the future.

There are any number of puzzling and unanswered questions in connection with Russia's atomic programme. Why, for example, were there no Russian atomic tests between October 1951 and August this year? How could the Russians announce so confidently in advance that they had solved the problem of hydrogen bomb production? One thing on which all American atomic officials insist is that you can never tell whether an atomic weapon will be successful till it has been "exploded" and shown itself

successful. Were not the Russians taking an enormous propaganda risk by announcing in advance the success of an event about which they could not be certain? Or were they confident that nobody could prove that they were successful or unsuccessful, so that it did not matter? Had the Russians conducted no tests for two years, because they had decided that they had a good enough atomic bomb and would devote their energies solely to stockpiling? Or had the atomic reactors, constructed according to information supplied by Fuchs,

broken down? The American war-time reactors known to Fuchs had in fact broken down. Then again how did Beria, head of the Russian atomic programme, fit into the picture? If his work had been so successful that he had produced a hydrogen bomb the charges against him seem even more absurd. In fact the more the matter is examined the analogy of the scientists and the shin-bone seems less apposite than that of the blind man groping in a dark room for a black cat which is not there.

DENYS SMITH.

## RAILWAY CONVERSATION PIECE. I.

By HON. SIR EDWARD CADOGAN

A SERIES of mischances recently left me with no alternative but to travel to a remote destination by a day express train. I prefer to while away this particular excursion in the state of oblivion which a sleeping compartment induces. Never having acquired the enviable habit of dozing in an upright posture I either endeavour to read without any ability to concentrate my thoughts or I gaze listlessly at the unfolding landscape. I do not know which of these two occupations is the more demoralizing.

On this occasion I arrived at the departure platform with ample time to spare. I selected a carriage which, up to date, was tenantless. I suppose I share with the majority of mankind an unreasoning prejudice against my fellow travellers on first acquaintance. Any resentment I may feel against them is hot enough when I find them already ensconced in the most desirable seats

with what I consider is more than their fair share of accommodation and floor space—although being constrained to admit that their superior punctuality entitles them to peg out a prior claim—but it is aggravated still further if they effect an entrance after me, often enough at the last moment when I had cherished a vain hope of securing the first-class carriage all to myself. In this particular encounter I was fated to suffer my usual disappointment. The first to arrive, after I had appropriated a corner seat with my back to the engine, was a benevolent looking old gentleman with a genial countenance, who, in spite of his amiable appearance, did not fail to antagonise me at this initial stage of our journey. Soon afterwards a somewhat dishevelled but not uncomely youth joined us. I did not approve of the style of attire he affected. But, in spite of his independence of any kind of convention and his sartorial peculiar-

rities, the general appearance he presented was one of distinction and good breeding.

For a quarter of an hour or so after the train had started we three fellow-travellers were intently studying our respective selections from the bookstall, no doubt subconsciously becoming mutually more accustomed to the presence of complete strangers and by that the more tolerant of them. The first to desist from this engrossing occupation was the benevolent old gentleman who enveloped his newspaper with a sigh, opened his attaché case to extract from it a book which he incontinently dropped on the floor in the proximity of my feet. Being younger and more agile than my elderly companion I was constrained to come to his assistance. I accordingly picked up the book and returned it to its owner who thanked me profusely, apologizing for his awkwardness. Whether he had deliberately let the book fall as a sort of challenge I was unable to ascertain, but I realized that the show was now on. Anyway, if I accepted this gage, if so it was, to join in a tournament of debate, the result, I decided, might turn out to be more profitable for myself than staring vacantly out of the train window. My companion certainly gave me no option in the matter. It was a serviceable enough pretext for him to open a discussion.

"Have you read this book?" he queried.

On acquainting myself with the title and the name of the author—it was *The Lost World* by de Riencourt, an account of the writer's sojourn in Lhasa—I replied in the affirmative.

"The passages in it which I found most arresting," my new acquaintance continued, "are those which relate to various conversations the author carried on with certain leading Tibetans who had some acquaintance with modern

science. According to these authorities the most recent discoveries have merely confirmed what Orientals have known for a thousand years, that modern science has reached an *impasse*. While they admit that it can still progress within its own limits and endlessly increase man's mastery over nature, it has to halt in front of ultimate barriers, a border beyond which scientific methods are worthless. They protest that the East knows infinitely more about the mind than we can ever hope to understand. To what purpose, to what end, they ask, is man's mastery over nature. The world is more sick than it has ever been because the Occidentals are only anxious to increase power."

"I have a lurking suspicion" added the old gentleman, "that there is much to be said for the point of view of these High Priests of Buddhism. Until the recent irruption of the Red forces into the seclusion of the Tibetans I cannot resist the inference that, in spite of their atrocious climate, to which in any case they must obviously be accustomed as we are to ours, they have been in all probability the most contented and therefore the most enviable people in this distracted world of ours. I attribute their felicity, which is now being threatened, to the triumph of mind over matter, if I may put it that way. By exactly the reverse process, the triumph of physical forces over the mind, even to the extent of enlisting the convulsions of nature in the service of our armed forces and imperilling the continued existence of our planet as such, we are for ever striving after the same objectives of peace and contentment without, you will admit, achieving the same measure of success which seems to have attended the efforts of the Tibetans in that regard. It is disheartening to say the least of it."

"But you are surely not suggesting

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that we should emulate the Lamaserie of Tibet and call a halt to our scientists along the road they are leading us, everywhere retracing our steps, confining ourselves exclusively to the things of the spirit." Thus I interrogated the old gentleman, not that I really imputed to him any intention to plead for extravagances of this nature, but rather to encourage him in pursuing and developing his theme.

"That would be unscrambling with a vengeance," he replied. "I am not suggesting anything so preposterous. You woefully misunderstand me. We cannot put the clock back although I think at the moment it wants regulating badly. I confess to you that the astonishing revelations of recent years in the realm of science have had a disturbing influence upon my mind, have filled me with a sense of uneasiness. I can well appreciate that they have induced the rising generation to place too material an interpretation upon the riddle of human existence."

As he delivered himself of these somewhat provocative sentiments I noticed that the youth, who had not hitherto evinced much inclination to be communicative, for the first time displayed a lively interest in his fellow-travellers. He seized the opportunity thus afforded to him, and remarked with an engaging smile:

"You will perhaps forgive me, Sir, for saying so, but my generation is getting somewhat weary of being told we are exclusively materialistic in our outlook on life, that we are hedonists, careless of the things of the spirit and all the rest of it. While undoubtedly the immense strides recently made by science in all its branches, to which you have alluded, tends to make us more sceptical and more disposed to forsake our original beliefs, you will surely agree that never at any time has there been a more sympathetic understanding

of the needs of our less fortunate fellow-men and a more earnest desire to supply them and to redress their grievances. These considerations alone, I venture to suggest, justify us in challenging the accusation that we are solely materialistic. Would you not be prepared to admit that a hundred years ago the educated governing classes, in spite of their professions of piety and virtue, were tolerating or even deliberately conniving at the most callous ill-treatment of the working-class population?"

"I might justifiably retaliate," the old gentleman replied with an artful smile, "that I, who approach the allotted span, grow a bit weary of the incessant charge against us that we of the Victorian era, notwithstanding our comparatively rigid code of morals were, all of us, hypocrites and self-seekers, that none of our professions of faith were genuine and that our religion was merely a contrivance for anæsthetizing the poor, rendering them insensible to their hard lot. I suggest to you that you have over-simplified your case. Besides I am not sure that it is altogether profitable or even fair to institute an odious comparison between different generations. Circumstances in the one case are so diverse from the circumstances in the other. Take for example the village life of the countryside when I first had any contact with it some sixty years ago. Ah! I know you will ask me whether I have read the report of the Royal Commission on the subject which was published not many years previous to the time I am alluding to. Having myself served on one or two of those august bodies I am in a position to assume that their reports are somewhat misleading. A Royal Commission is set up not to pay compliments. Its business is not to flatter but to find fault. Its main task is to reveal hidden abuses and it wastes no time in looking



upon the brighter side of human affairs. That is not its concern. Therefore in its findings emphasis is always upon what is defective, not upon what is sufficient. Moreover, to paint the picture in its most lurid colours is more likely to attract the attention of Authority and increase the chances of its report being retrieved from the Whitehall scrapheap.

"In spite of all that the Royal Commission had to impart on the subject I still protest that the village life, as I knew it many years ago in East Anglia, had much to recommend it. The Royal Commission tells us the cottages were insanitary. In some of them there was no 'plumbing'. There was precious little 'plumbing', I can assure you, in the stately homes of England, many of which I visited, in those days. The Royal Commission tells us that tuberculosis was rife in the countryside. It is prevalent to-day in spite of the march of medical science. But the average tiller of the soil, of my earliest recollection, was a magnificent specimen physically, muscular and often of heroic proportions, splendid British stock to breed from and his longevity was proverbial—a music-hall joke. The Royal Commission lays stress upon the meagreness of his wages but the cost of living was infinitesimal compared with to-day, and I venture to assert, what their detractors will never admit, that most rural landlords of the patrician families were the fathers of their people and saw that they lacked for nothing. The Royal Commission animadverts on the low standard of morality, because, forsooth, there were bastards to be found in the village, a piece of evidence which proves no more than that they were less sophisticated in those days. I do not doubt that there was less promiscuity amongst the villagers than there is to-day. In fact at the time when the Royal Commission reported, in

spite of overcrowded conditions, their domestic life was a model for us all. Husbands were faithful to their wives and both made excellent parents. It was no doubt patriarchal. They were a hard-working, industrious and contented people. Their amenities and recreations were few according to modern standards. But at that time they had not 'learnt to stray' beyond the confines of the parish. The Royal Commission cast aspersions on their illiteracy. In a pedantic sense their education was no doubt elementary and defective. But their knowledge of the ways of nature was exceptional—a knowledge far more useful to them and therefore profitable to the community than a great deal of the hotchpot with which the education authorities see fit to inflate them at school. If they were to remain agricultural labourers they could not graduate in a better university than the fields and forests of the countryside.

"The village life of these long ago days is still a very fragrant memory with me. I trust to the evidence of my own eyes rather to that of any State Paper, however authoritative."

"I agree with much that you have said," I interjected, "but, on the wider issue you must admit that we have succeeded in harnessing nature to our own purposes many of which are to the inestimable benefit of mankind."

"I am not sure that isn't something in the nature of a *cliché* and like most of its kind contains an elementary fallacy. What has really happened is that our minds have been ingenious enough to invent devices which have let loose the forces of nature upon ourselves and now we are justifiably apprehensive that Nature will prove too powerful and overwhelm us. We have paid and are still paying a very high price for the convenience that our discoveries have made available to the



public. It is certainly legitimate to argue that the two world wars and the ever-present menace of a third hovering over us are part of the price we have to pay for our ingenuity. If we continue to plan our lives solely upon matter our minds if not our bodies will incur a drastic penalty which I for one cannot envisage with any degree of complacency."

"I don't want to be dogmatic" observed the young man, reasserting himself into the conversation, "I have to agree that war is infinitely more disastrous both to victors and vanquished than it used to be, but that consideration cannot account altogether for the surge of individual grievances, suppressed in the days of our forefathers, which is so prominent a feature in our national existence to-day and which tend to revolutionary influences getting the upper hand. I admit we are a restless generation, never contented or satisfied with our lot, indulging in every kind of inflationary experiment in an endeavour to better it without, I acknowledge, any very conspicuous measure of success. What, sir, can you adduce as to the main reason for this phenomenon?"

The old gentleman, thus appealed to, grew pensive and remained silent for a short interval. "It is the commonest error," he resumed, "in spite of all that experience teaches us to the contrary, that we, most of us, do expect too much of life even if we contribute nothing to it ourselves and this misconception surely accounts for the disappointment and indeed failure which many of us encounter on our earthly pilgrimage."

"Wouldn't you agree," I enquired, "that this tendency to expect too much of life is aided and abetted by recent governments offering to us an ever-increasing measure of gratuitous assistance."

"That may be so," replied the old gentleman, cautiously. "The average citizen nowadays gets so much done for him by what is loosely called the State that he is induced to believe that no exertion on his own account is required of him. Sit back and do nothing, let the State do everything for you is surely a demoralizing enough doctrine to teach to the young. I speak with all due reserve but it is going to make your generation rather spineless don't you think?"

"But the more education is made available," commented the youth, "the less disparity there will be as between one individual and another, surely?"

"I should have thought it would have exactly the reverse effect. Education, far from turning a dunce into a genius, merely draws attention to the fact that he is a dunce, and for this valuable item of information the taxpayer has to pay an exorbitant charge. Moreover the levellers leave out of account the undoubted psychological truth that opportunity does not come so much from without as from within. Any boy who is worth his keep will create his own opportunity. This can be proved, apart from plenty of other evidence, by the fact that, during the Victorian era, when there was little enough education provided by the State, there emerged from obscurity a prodigious galaxy of talent in various human activities, unrivalled even in our enlightened age, men and women owing nothing to anybody but themselves, with no other resources but their own intellectual abilities and attainments. No amount of neglect seems ever to hamper the expression of true genius. This phenomenon seems rather to stultify the levelling out process which is the unaccountable concern of so many of our contemporary educationists."

"How do you explain what appears

on the surface to be so striking a paradox?" I enquired.

"It may well be," replied the old gentleman, "that in our solicitude to provide every sort of educational facility to all and sundry, these well-intentioned efforts have an enervating and relaxing influence upon many who, if they had to provide their own opportunities, would have been stimulated into struggling the harder for achievement and recognition. The advantage of having everything supplied to the individual in the way of education may be largely discounted by a failure to supply the grit which would enable your young genius to make good without these adventitious aids."

"Do you believe," enquired the youth, "that there is a tendency nowadays to induce those with scant intellectual equipment or any kind of talent to take up the attitude that service is ignoble?"

"I am certainly apprehensive that advanced education for all encourages that dangerous fallacy. Manifestly few are qualified to command. The aspirants to fame are many, the number of those who achieve it negligible. The rest should be more contented than they are to serve within the limits of their very average capacities. Let me reiterate that you are inciting the majority of pupils to aim higher than they ever can achieve. When they fail they become useless if not positively dangerous members of the community. Where I disagree with the modern educational system is in its wasting far too much time and money upon those of inferior intelligence. The geniuses are rare but quite easy to discover and segregate. By all means spend money and effort upon their instruction, always provided they have no resources of their own."

"If you will excuse me for my effrontery in saying so," the youth

replied, seizing the opportunity he had obviously been waiting for during most of the old gentleman's diatribe, "your views on this matter I should imagine would be too strong meat for consumption even by the Tory party to-day."

"I can assure you," the old gentleman answered, "that I never have been a Tory in the party sense but in my early days I professed the creed of the Socialist party although I have never sought its favours."

"What influences worked a change in your views?" I ventured to ask, "for, after all you have told us, you obviously have been transfigured in a political sense."

"Most men of my age," said the old gentleman reflectively, "have passed through a mellowing process even those of us who have been firebrands in our younger days, and we begin to feel our way more cautiously with much less assurance than those who still retain the agility and resilience of boyhood. But I had very definite reasons for abandoning, or perhaps I should say, modifying my earlier political beliefs. That, however, is a long story and I hesitate to inflict it upon you. I have been far too garrulous as it is."

"I would not be so discourteous as to agree with you on that score," said the youth. "On the contrary there is no other way in which I would sooner beguile the journey than to hear the views and reminiscences of one who has had so much experience as yourself."

When our colloquies had first commenced the questions our young friend had put seemed to me sententious and almost disdainful, but now I thought I detected in him an awakening interest in what our venerable sage had to impart and to attach more importance to his judgment. In response to our urgent appeal the latter agreed to supply us with some self-revelations.

EDWARD CADOGAN.

(To be continued.)

# THE FIG-TREE

By EDWARD HYAMS

*FICUS CARICA* is said to be a native plant of Persia and Afghanistan. Wild fig trees can be found growing in the least propitious soils all over the Mediterranean basin, and Asia Minor, but there are grounds for believing that the tree was first cultivated in south-west Asia whence it has spread all over the world in the subtropical and temperate climates. In temperate climates the plant is deciduous, but I have been informed on fairly good authority that in south-east Asia it is an evergreen, and the peculiar fruiting habit, even in England, suggests that in some places fruit is produced continuously throughout the year as fast as the tree grows and provides room for it.

The edible pulp of the fig is, biologically speaking, a short swollen piece of stem; no flowers are apparent, the fruitlets appearing fully formed in the axils of the leaves. The flowers, which are microscopically small, are borne in a tight cluster inside this vessel, and there exists a very fine tunnel, about the thickness of a needle, joining the flower cavity to an opening, at the "eye" of the fig. According to some observers a pollinating insect of minute size gains access to the flowers by this means; whether, in fact, any such insect exists or is needed, I have been unable to determine: it seems rather improbable.

I grow six kinds of figs in a high, exposed situation, and there are at least eleven varieties which can be cultivated in the open air in England. There is a legend that figs must be planted in sight of the sea, by which, no doubt, is meant that they prefer situations free from frost. But I

know of successful fig trees in rather a bleak part of Yorkshire, and high up in Suffolk, where they do very well on the very kind of dense clay which is traditionally supposed to be pernicious to them. The eleven English varieties are a mere fraction of the great number in cultivation: like the vine, the fig is no sooner taken to a new country than it begins to adapt itself, and seems nearly always to produce local variations suited to the new conditions. This fact alone, as I shall try to show, suggests a very great antiquity as a cultivated plant, and so does the remarkable morphological diversity. Perhaps no fruit is so various in its forms, not only of the leaf, one of the most beautiful in nature, but of the fruit which may be white, gold, brown, mahogany, chocolate, or even black shot with red; which may be button shaped, or variously pyriform, oval or nearly spherical; and which may be as small as a crown piece, or as large, for example in the case of the "Magnolia" clone of the Brunswick variety, as a well-grown Comice pear.

Now, when the varieties of a fruit plant of which only a single species is the origin, are so numerous and diverse, it is safe to assume that the plant has been cultivated for thousands of years, especially when it shows a very wide tolerance of climates and soils. The reason is that the process which gives rise to sharply defined varieties includes isolation of clones in local gardens, selection of mutants, cross fertilization within a very limited number of varieties, subsequent bringing together of differentiated kinds from far places, and so forth. And this alone is an argument in favour of south-west

Asia as the original habitat of the cultivated fig tree, since it is probably true to say that only in that region has civilized horticulture been practised long enough, say four or even five thousand years, to produce the result which we have to-day in the fig varieties now cultivated.

In historical antiquity the fig tree was always very closely associated with the grape-vine, but the fig lagged well behind the vine in its early movements; whereas vineyards were a commonplace at the time when the Homeric poems were written, the cultivated fig was unknown. It arrived in Greece a couple of centuries before the heyday of Athens; in Italy and France, where the vine was already well-established, rather later; in Britain perhaps as much as 800 years or even more after the vine; but in America, South Africa and Australia within a few decades of the vine, if not contemporaneously. The forces which shifted the fig tree were, however, the same, and as these have been dealt with in the essay on the vine it will perhaps be more interesting to examine the association of the two plants, rather than trace the route over again.

The earliest written records in which this association is made clear are those we call the Old Testament; there is, for example, the well-known figure which expresses a peaceful prosperity, the man who sits under his own vine and fig-tree. From this and other references, it is fairly safe to say that figs were being cultivated in what is now Palestine by the 12th century B.C.; very likely the date is far earlier; very likely figs were by that time well and widely established in Egypt and in the Euphrates and Tigris countries.

The attributes of the fig-tree, from the shape and colour of the leaves, to its phenomenal fecundity naturally attract the poet in search of figures of speech, so that we can be sure that

wherever it was familiar in the garden, it would be mentioned by the poets of the time and place. And a very early occurrence of the fig-tree in Greek writing associates it with the vine as closely as possible; Hipponax of Ephesus, an iambic poet of the 6th century B.C. calls the fig-tree the "sister" of the vine. However, he is not the first among the Greeks to know figs.

Hesiod has never heard of this tree. The wild fig-tree occurs in the *Iliad*, but not the garden tree. The latter, however, does occur several times in the *Odessey*, but in conditions which do not enable us to say that the fig was cultivated in Homer's time. The first passage is in the Book of the Dead where, according to Dr. E. V. Rieu's prose translation, Odysseus saw, "the awful agonies that Tantalus had to bear. . . . Trees spread their foliage high over the pool and dangled fruits above his head—pear-trees and pomegranates, apple-trees with their glossy burden, sweet figs and luxuriant olives. But whenever the old man tried to grasp them in his hands, the wind would toss them towards the shadowy clouds." But the evidence of language has led scholars to suggest that this passage is an obvious and clumsy late addition to the poem. I believe that, if it were necessary, it could be shown that this is so on what one might call pomological grounds: the cultivation of the olive in Greece is later than the *Odessey*; it is very doubtful whether pomegranates would have been known in the 9th century B.C. And, by the way, no man who had ever eaten an olive from the tree, a horrid experience, would hope to quench his thirst by that means. The second passage in which the fig-tree is mentioned, that describing the garden of Alcinoüs, also happens to be one rejected by Greek scholars as relatively late; and so, finally, does the third

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passage, that in which Laertes is described as a planter of fig-trees. It is pleasant to suppose that late editors of the "text" thought it advisable to bring the pomology of the poem up to date, in case "readers" might not, otherwise, be impressed with the luxuriance of the gardens described.

However, earlier than Hipponax, the surviving remnants of the satires of Archilochus of Paros include a reference to figs as one of the products of his native place. This poet was at work early in the 7th century, moreover we know that fig culture was a commonplace, indeed that Attica was famous for figs, by the 5th century; it is therefore reasonable to suppose that the tree was introduced into Greece between the middle of the 8th century B.C. and the middle of the seventh.

Where from? Again it follows the route of the vine, so that detail would be tedious. The fig-tree reached Greece from Lydia, where it was so greatly valued that one of the arguments urged by the peace party in that country, when Cræsus projected war against Persia, was that it seemed hardly worth while to conquer a people who drank no wine and ate no figs; the presumption being that they had neither.

The Athenians of the great age were inordinately fond of figs, but possibly they had to be. Their problem of subsistence was an extraordinarily interesting one, especially for us, who are in something of the same case. Attica had a miserable soil, unable to raise either enough grain or enough meat to feed the rising population. There are three economic plants which produce fruit of superior quality in just such soils: the vine, the olive, and the fig. The Atticans planted them on a large scale, and relied on trading their produce overseas, for example to the Black Sea coast, to get the grain they needed. Meat they did without. To carry their wine and oil the Athenians

had to have jars; hence their subsequently "world"-famous pottery came into existence, and became a valuable export on its own account. And to take their wine, oil and figs to their customers they had to have, first, a merchant marine; then a navy to protect it; hence their maritime superiority. Now, since the primacy of the Athenian culture, the fact that it was "the education of Hellas" arose out of their seafaring and trading, the artistic and philosophical splendour of Athens can be traced directly to the wretched soil of Attica. And one of means by which the leisure of a Plato was supported was the trade in dried figs. It is no wonder that Plato was nicknamed *Philosukos*, the Fig-Lover, although the nickname certainly did not derive from the argument above. But so representative of Attica did figs become that while the bravery and loyalty of that city maintained a continued defiance of Xerxes, the Great King kept a dish of figs on his dining-table to remind him that Athens still defied him. But when the qualities of character which had made and kept Athens great, declined, and the defeated, cowed Athenians included a numerous class of delators, the citizens were stigmatized by foreigners with the contemptuous nickname of *suko-*, or *sykophants*, that is *fig-informers*.

It is usually stated that the fig-tree was introduced to Italy by "Greek colonists." It may quite as well have been introduced by Phœnician or Carthaginian traders. The tree beneath which Romulus and Remus were suckled by a wolf was a fig-tree, but doubtless a wild one. Taking the story as a myth, the fig-tree would figure in it, as in the Eden myth, as a fertility symbol—another association with the vine—by reason of its fecundity. Thus the Latins called the tree *Ficus ruminalis*, a reference, according to Victor Heyn, to Jupiter Ruminus



and Diva Rumina, the fertility manifestation of the principal divine pair.

As Pliny dealt with the proliferation of vine varieties in his time, so he dealt, or rather more or less failed to deal, with the equally numerous fig varieties. But there was no sort of varietal stability; the famous commercial fig growers of Smyrna, whose dried figs had been exported all over the known civilized world since early Republican times, were always producing new varieties, and the trees were then brought into Italy, France, and Spain, where, but notably in Italy, they were greatly valued and almost a staple crop.

The traffic in fresh figs was always local, for their tenderness makes them bad travellers. Thus Cato, wishing to galvanize the Senate, which seems to have been as difficult as galvanizing the House of Commons, held up a fresh and perfect fig from Carthage and warned his fellow-Senators "So near is the enemy to our walls!" But dried figs were traded very remotely. It is inconceivable that figs were ever grown

by the ancient Goths and Wends, for example, yet their languages, says Heyn, contain words for figs, all derivable from the Greek *δῦκον*.

There are a number of stories concerning the introduction of the fig-tree to Britain, none of them verifiable: the Romans introduced them into Sussex; an abbot of Fécamp introduced them in Norman times, again to Sussex; Thomas à Becket, returning from a pilgrimage to Rome, introduced the fig-tree by planting it at Tarring, yet again in Sussex. This persistence of Sussex is singular; and as late as the first decade of this century figs were grown on a commercial scale in that county, and great numbers sent to London (where they fetched 8d. a pound!). It seems to me very improbable that the Romans would have done without the fig-tree about their villas, since it grows perfectly well in south Britain. It is even quite possible that the fig-tree arrived in Britain, after its immense journey from S.W. Asia, even before Cæsar.

EDWARD HYAMS.

## FIFTY YEARS AGO

THE following short extract is from "Some Early Impressions—Journalism" by Leslie Stephen, which appeared in the November, 1903, issue of *The National Review*.

When you encounter an individual human being you have to be decently civil. I do not know whether we agree any better, but we certainly do not damn each other so savagely; we distinguish between the man and the abstract principle which he defends, and have to admit that our enemy is, after all, made of flesh and blood. Periodicals, too, have had the advantage of receiving contributions into which the best writers have put their best work. Perhaps we may regret that some men of ability have been tempted to such utter-

ances when they ought to have been composing solid masterpieces in several octavo volumes. I will not argue the point. Hawthorne, I think, argues somewhere that civilized men should live in tents instead of houses, to be free from the bondage of the ancestral conditions. So, one may conjecture, the author of the future will give up bothering himself about property and be content with writing for his contemporaries and the immediate present. Perhaps his work will not in the result be the less lasting. At any rate, there came to be a good deal more journalism which was better than "ditch-water"; which contained serious and powerful articles dealing with important problems.



# BOOKS NEW AND OLD

## HERE ARE TRAVELLERS\*

By ERIC GILLETT

BOSWELL'S excellence and industry as a writer are only now fully realized. For far too long Macaulay's sweeping condemnation, "that he was a coxcomb and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who knew him" was accepted generally. The late Sir Walter Raleigh did something to redress the balance. Then, with the publication of *Boswell's London Journal*, 1762-1763, it became realized that the author was not only highly gifted as a writer but also as an artist. Just one indication of this is to be seen in the device by which he often wrote up the records of several days at a time without allowing the reader to perceive that the diarist knew what was coming.

I should place the new instalment, *Boswell on the Grand Tour*, somewhere between the *London Journal* and *Boswell in Holland* in merit and I should give it a niche nearer the *Journal* because it contains fascinating and memorable portraits of Rousseau and Voltaire. I do not believe that either of these great men would have agreed with Macaulay that Boswell had no wit, no humour, no eloquence. For many years Boswell and Pepys have been accepted at their own valuation, Macaulay at his. Neither of the first two would ever have claimed to be a pundit, and Boswell was probably the most successful hero-worshipper in history. Until recently it seemed that he had confined his attentions principally to Johnson and Paoli. The *Journals* now in course of publication show him to have been

also a connoisseur of obscure German dynasties and a determined and resolute pursuer of Rousseau and Voltaire. *Boswell on the Grand Tour* is a bubbly lively record of these activities.

In 1764 he set out from Holland with the Earl Marischal, the influential adviser of Frederick the Great, upon a tour of Europe. After the gloomy celibacy of Utrecht he had decided to turn over a new and fleshly leaf, and as far as his writing is concerned there is no doubt that it did him a great deal of good. As he weaves his way from Berlin to Magdeburg, from Mannheim to Karlsruhe, expatiating as he goes on the amenities of the courts, their hospitality, or lack of it, the friendliness or otherwise of the ruling princes, he is at the very top of his form. Repeatedly he congratulates himself. "Am I indeed the dull dog of Utrecht?" he asks, and answers himself that he is firm and sound and gay as ever. Only

\* *Boswell on the Grand Tour: Germany and Switzerland*, 1764. Edited by F. A. Pottle. Heinemann. 25s.

*Seven Years in Tibet*. By Heinrich Harrer. Hart-Davis. 18s.

*The Hill of Devi*. By E. M. Forster. Arnold. 15s.

*Jungle Lore*. By Jim Corbett. Cumberlege, O.U.P. 10s. 6d.

*In Sara's Tents*. By Walter Starkie. Murray. 25s.

*Humanities*. By Desmond MacCarthy. MacGibbon & Kee. 15s.

*Performing Flea*. By P. G. Wodehouse. With a Foreword and Notes by W. Townsend. Jenkins. 12s. 6d.

*Letters from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts*, 1841-1865. Edited by Edgar Johnson. Cape. 25s.

*North-West Europe, 1944-5: The Achievement of 21st Army Group*. By John North. H.M.S.O. 10s. 6d.

Frederick the Great escapes him. In spite of what is now strangely called a "token resistance" Rousseau and Voltaire were duly caught, mounted and docketed. They are among the high-lights of Boswell's collection, as *Boswell on the Grand Tour* is among the best of his books. The editorial work of Professor F. A. Pottle is as masterly and rewarding as ever.

After his strenuous experiences in the Hebrides with Dr. Johnson it seems likely that Boswell would have made light of a trip to Tibet but I do not think that even he would have done better than Herr Heinrich Harrer, a well-known Austrian mountaineer and ski-ing champion, who, while climbing in the Himalayas was caught by the outbreak of the last war and interned in India. After three unsuccessful attempts he managed to escape by an almost incredible effort and with one companion crossed the Himalayas into Tibet. He remained for *Seven Years in Tibet*, and his book, excellently translated by Richard Graves, gives a most attractive picture of his experiences. It appears that the Tibetans believe in testing their visitors. How far Herr Harrer was deliberately "examined" it is impossible to gather. Probably he does not know himself, but it is certainly curious that he seems to have been accepted, at first in the outlying districts, afterwards in Lhasa itself, and finally by the Dalai Lama and his advisers, after he had been discouraged and told over and over again that he must leave Tibet. In the end he did so after a close association with the Dalai Lama had been terminated only by the Chinese attack on the Tibetan frontier in October, 1950.

The Tibetans have some charming characteristics. They are hospitable and good-natured, and Herr Harrer, who seems to be extremely adaptable,

soon found his way into their hearts by his willingness to do almost anything from constructing lawn tennis courts to building fountains. The climax of his time in Tibet was his close association with the Dalai Lama. He found him to be a fourteen-year old boy of exceptional mechanical knowledge and very great intelligence, lonely and high spirited.

*Seven Years in Tibet* is an account given with modesty and charm. It fulfils the author's wish that it may create some understanding for a people whose will to live in peace and freedom "has won so little sympathy from an indifferent world."

It was in 1912 that Mr. E. M. Forster paid a visit to the State of Dewas Senior in Central India and in 1921 spent six months there as temporary private secretary to the Maharajah. *The Hill of Devi* is composed of letters written home, during these two periods and a linking commentary done this year. In a preface he informs the reader that he hopes the fineness of Dewas Senior as well as the strangeness may occasionally shine through his letters. It does, but so does the astonishing capacity for muddle and disorder that characterizes so many Indian minds. The Maharajah is a delightful person, kindly, sympathetic, and sweet-natured, but apparently unable to cope with mysterious intrigues directed against him by members of his first wife's family. Mr. Forster describes his connection with this small Indian state as only a skilled novelist could. In his hands the serio-comic story has a bitter-sweet unity, the state is presented with its Gilbertian possibilities fully realized:

In the 18th century, the then Rajah being fond of his brother, gave him a share in the Government, and his descendants extended the courtesy to

## HERE ARE TRAVELLERS

his (the brother's) descendants. When the English came (early 19th cent.) they seem to have mistaken the situation, and supposed that there were two independent rulers in the same city. They guaranteed both, with the result that now there are twin dynasties, with their possessions all peppered in and out of each other. Each has his own court, his own army, his own water works and tennis club, his own palace, before each of which different bands play different tunes at the same hour every evening. It is true that Devi (the sacred mountain that stands above the distracted city like an acropolis)—has at last been divided between them, so that each can get to his own shrine without walking on the other's footpath; and it is true that they have come to an arrangement over the flag staff on the top, by which it belongs to both of them—upper half to one, lower half to the other, and the flag flying half mast to be neutral.

Dewas and other small dependencies are changing their nature under the new dispensation. Mr. Forster has given a timely salute to the old régime. There is nothing patronizing in his account of the little oriental court because Mr Forster knew and understood the Maharajah and his household. *The Hill of Devi* sheds a beam of welcome light upon a fantastic corner of the old Indan world. It gives a soft and kindly illumination to an oddly gracious scene. Few men have written with such understanding and sympathy as Colonel Jim Corbett has shown in his earlier books, of which *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* is a jungle classic. In it he showed his immense knowledge of the wild things and certainly no one has ever written before with such sympathy about the tiger. His new book, *Jungle Lore* is almost as good as *Man-Eaters*, and it would be difficult to give it higher praise. Here, once again, are breath-

taking stories of tigers and other fierce beasts, and there is at least one tale about a practical jungle-joke that went wrong when a young gentleman incautiously disguised himself as a bear and received two rounds in the "chest." Most fascinating are the author's chapters which deal with the harmless jungle animals. This is not a book to be summarized easily. I can only say that it takes a high place among its writer's other works, which means that *Jungle Lore* is with the very best books ever written about wild creatures and jungle life.

Similarly it might be said that Dr. Walter Starkie's *In Sara's Tents* will be equally prominent among gypsy literature. He has built his book up around a most interesting central idea. Every year on May 24 gypsies come from all parts of the world to the shores of the Camargue, where there rises the fortress-church of Les Saintes Maries de la Mer. In the unconsecrated crypt they hold their ceremony. It has been Dr. Starkie's custom to join the pilgrims to the Camargue and he takes their arrival as the starting point for another of his investigations into the lives of a people "who seek no power, no wealth. They seek only to preserve their freedom. This, amidst the tyranny, selfishness, hatred of to-day, is what makes them so significant in the world."

Dr. Starkie's books are Borrovian with a difference. They err on the side of truth by comparison with that indefatigable romancer. *In Sara's Tents* is a learned, satisfying, and entirely readable book. Dr. Starkie is a scholar, but he is first of all a man of the world, and so, in a similar sense was Sir Desmond MacCarthy, whose book of essays, *Humanities*, has come to delight us. MacCarthy found so much to interest him in life that he never found time to write all the

novels, biographies and plays he had once dreamed of writing. There are some writers who manage to achieve an impressive output of creative work and keep a regular review column going at the same time, with a play or two thrown in. He was not one of them. He was a sociable person and he set about his *Sunday Times* article most conscientiously every week. He had to explain and interpret each book as he saw it. The process was not light or easy to him. His reviews were, in the best sense, appreciations and he was fortunate in being able to write them out of his inexhaustible curiosity about life and his delight in it. That is why some of his essays read so well now and will continue to do so for centuries. I prefer to read him on Leigh Hunt or De Quincey than on the Labour Party, but this is, of course, only a matter of opinion, and there are two short stories, *The Mark on the Shutter* and *The Bear*, which should interest the anthologists for years to come. In a period singularly short of good critics MacCarthy is already sadly missed.

Mr. P. G. Wodehouse's literary reputation does not depend upon his critical ability, although it must be obvious to the most casual reader of his novels that he has read a lot. Quotations from the Bible and from most of the poets float into his pages as naturally as Bertie Wooster floats out of them on his way to have a quick one at the Drones'. Mr. Wodehouse's old friend and literary sparring partner, Mr. William Townend, himself the author of thirty-nine books, has had the happy idea of bringing together a selection of the correspondence he has received from Mr. Wodehouse over a period of more than thirty years. After they both left Dulwich, letters were exchanged until 1920. Most of them have been lost but from 1920 up

to the present day Mr. Townend has kept all the Wodehouse letters he has received. They include the period of the last war when Mr. Wodehouse's activities as a prisoner of war provoked much unfavourable comment and when he earned from the Irish playwright, Mr. Sean O'Casey, the strange statement that he was "English literature's performing flea." The present volume of letters is, accordingly, called *Performing Flea*. It establishes Mr. Wodehouse as one of our best comic letter writers. It will certainly cause most of us to revise our estimate of his wartime behaviour, and it gives the clearest and most helpful account of the methods of work of a professional humorist that I have ever read.

At the end of it all Mr. Wodehouse comments on the script of the book sent to him before it was set up in proof. Once again his flair for criticizing his own and other writers' work does not desert him:

The impression these letters have left me with mentally is the rather humbling one that I am a bad case of arrested mental development. Mentally, I seem not to have progressed a step since I was eighteen. With world convulsions happening every hour on the hour, I appear to be still the rather backward lad I was when we brewed our first cup of tea in our study together, my only concern the outcome of a Rugby football match.

Indeed it is true that even during internment Mr. Wodehouse was showing more interest in the doings of two Alleynian athletes, H. T. Bartlett and S. C. Griffith, than in anything else, and his attitude towards the discomforts of captivity is most objective. He writes frankly about his war experiences and there are extracts from an unpublished book about them tentatively called *Wodehouse in Wonderland*. But it is the letters about the way

## HERE ARE TRAVELLERS

he writes which are the most valuable things in the book. If anyone thinks it is easy to write comic novels let him read *Performing Flea*, and if there is anyone who contemplates fiction let him absorb Wodehouse's dicta, as, for example, "What a sweat a novel is till you are sure of your characters. And what a vital thing it is to have plenty of things for a major character to do. That is the test. If they aren't in situations, characters can't be major characters, not even if you have the rest of the troupe talk their heads off about them."

There is no doubt that this performing flea is a brilliant *virtuoso*, but his considerable talent cannot compare with the blazing genius of Charles Dickens, who has rightly been praised more for his fiction and his dramatic readings than for anything else made public about him. His biographers have not succeeded in making him attractive as a man. He may have been a sublime showman, but as father and husband he was not a success. On the whole this is a fair estimate. It is comparatively rare for a genius of the first water to be an exemplary family man and there has been much unnecessary dismay because Dickens did not manage to be both. He was at his best as a friend and for about twenty-five years he worked with Baroness Burdett-Coutts as unselfishly as any two people could in the cause of various charities with Dickens advising the Baroness on her benefactions. Later the creation of Urania House brought them even closer together and Dickens's careful and often highly detailed work for these poor girls is a tribute to his genuinely kind heart. I should not put him in the front rank as a letter writer, but he was a very good and vivid one, and there is sometimes an element of greatness in what he says.

*Letters from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts, 1841-1865* is an important addition to Dickensiana.

*North-West Europe, 1944-5* by John North was written at the request of the Government to give some idea of the achievement of the 21st Army Group. The author's intention was to present dispassionately and without heroics the broad picture of the Allied invasion of Europe in the summer of 1944. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, with the assistance of the Curwen Press, has turned out an effective, moderately priced book. Mr. John North will be remembered for his graphic history of the Dardanelles campaign, *Gallipoli: The Fading Vision*. In *North-West Europe* he has selected the essentials from a mass of material with a cleverly critical eye. His journey, like all the others noticed here this month, whether geographic or literary, was really necessary and important. Altogether I found this a very rewarding month for reading.

ERIC GILLETT.

### A MONOPOLIST EXPLAINS

THE B.B.C. FROM WITHIN. By Lord Simon of Wythenshawe. *Gollancz*. 16s.

**L**ORD SIMON OF WYTHENSHAW was Chairman of the Board of Governors of the British Broadcasting Corporation from 1947 until 1952. Though this is a well-paid and, as interpreted by Lord Simon, an arduous task, he had time for another one. "I decided to write a book about the B.B.C. almost as soon as I was appointed Chairman." Lord Simon was a follower of the Webbs. He had already written on the administration of Manchester and Moscow. His book on the B.B.C. was to be of the same kind: charts of administrators, tables of finance and of listeners—a bureaucrat's paradise.



It is difficult to know which Lord Simon—the Chairman of two great engineering firms, the former Lord Mayor of Manchester, or the Chairman of the Council of Manchester University—enjoyed the task most. “Then came the shock of the 1952 Charter introducing commercial television and putting an end to the B.B.C. monopoly.” Lord Simon had to change his plan. He tacked on a controversial defence of the existing system, which is out of tune with the exposition in the first part of the book. On the other hand, few readers would have been found for a textbook on how the B.B.C. works. Controversy, even in Lord Simon’s gentle hands, is more interesting.

The description in the first part is, no doubt, accurate enough. The charts are exactly like those which great industrial concerns produce for the edification of the shareholders, or—even more appropriate—the diagrams of Soviet democracy, from the Supreme Soviet to the village. These charts may have some use as a matter of reference in the office. They do nothing to explain the reality. Lord Simon regretfully suggests this himself. The Governors were supposed to be doing this, that or the other. In fact, the Director-General did not allow them to know either what he or anyone else was doing. And if Lord Simon’s suggestion of subordinating the Director-General to the Chairman were carried out, it would only substitute one irresponsible dictator for another. Two verbal points are of interest in Lord Simon’s exposition. He refers constantly to “the hierarchy.” The word is more appropriate than he supposes. But when he describes the “hierarchy” he is guilty (no doubt unconsciously) of sharp practice. The key officials in the B.B.C. are “Controllers.” Lord Simon writes: “The Controllers are known in this book as ‘Editors.’”

That single sentence rubs out all the faults of the B.B.C. If the B.B.C. had Editors, their task would be to give out; and the more they gave out, the more pleased they would be. Their attention would be focused on their consumers—the public. But no such Editors exist. The

Controllers are not so named by chance. Their task is to stop things going out, or rather to see that everything which goes out is innocuous. Their attention is focused on possible complaints, not on pleasing the public. They fear complaints by telephone, complaints from their superiors, most of all complaints in the House of Commons. If only the B.B.C. programmes could be “controlled” from going out altogether, there would be no complaints at all. But then everyone would be out of a job. The task of the Controllers, therefore, is to stop as much as possible from going out and yet to give the impression that Broadcasting House is humming with activity. And so, of course, it is. Censorship always takes more time than creation.

No one would expect the Archbishop of Canterbury to write a book denouncing the Established Church; and it would be equally foolish to expect a criticism of the B.B.C. monopoly from a former Chairman of Governors. One establishment props up the other. For instance, organized religion “in the main stream of historic Christianity” gets eight hours a week; all the other religions, and all discussion and controversy, get about half an hour a week. This is British fair play and tolerance at its most sanctimonious. What is the point anyway of having talks on religion, or any other subject, which the great majority already agree with? In that case any listener could give them for himself. Again, Lord Simon says complacently that when he was Chairman “we had a number of complaints of unfairness from the lunatic fringe, but the political parties made not more than half a dozen complaints between them.” This is totalitarianism at one remove. Russia has the one-party State; we have the two-party State. Any individual or opinion outside one of these two parties is “the lunatic fringe.” Lord Simon assumes throughout his book that freedom of expression means freedom for the two parties. The exact opposite is the case. Expression would be much freer if no one outside Parliament was allowed to speak for anyone except himself.



## A MONOPOLIST EXPLAINS

Lord Simon calls the Governors "the watchdogs of democracy." Whom do they watch and whom do they guard? They certainly do not guard the B.B.C. from political pressure. They cannot; they are appointed by the Government and must obey its orders. For instance, they accepted, without a murmur, the order that "no discussions or statements may be broadcast on any issue which is within a fortnight of debate in either House." It is interesting to imagine what the newspapers would be like if they obeyed this rule.

Lord Simon makes a great deal of the educational duties of the B.B.C. It is supposed to be lifting the listener's standards all the time without his knowing it. But Lord Simon does not like this trick when it is played on him. He complains that he prefers light music and can get nothing but classical music on the Third Programme. He really cannot have it both ways. Either he is a boob and a blockhead and ought to have classical music rammed down his throat, or every listener is as much entitled to kick against this cultural snobbery as he is. Once admit that my judgment or Lord Simon's or Lord Reith's is "better" than that of any other licence-holder, and there is no stopping-place short of Rome or Moscow.

Anyone who dislikes popes and dictators must want the whole autocratic system brought to an end as soon as possible. But how? Ideally the Governors should be elected by the licence-holders. Short of that there is only competition. Lord Simon makes an unanswerable case for commercial television when he writes of "In the News":

Commercial broadcasting could only envy the B.B.C.'s success in staging so attractive a broadcast; it would be their plain duty to beat us in popularity by making their discussions more sensational and inevitably more irresponsible. And what could the Cabinet do about it? Nothing whatever.

If this is true—and Lord Simon should know—commercial broadcasting means freedom. "And what could the Cabinet do about it? Nothing whatever."

A. J. P. TAYLOR.

## VOICE OF SOCIALISM

ANEURIN BEVAN. Vincent Brome.  
*Longmans. 18s.*

IT has often been said that Left-wing political parties cannot stand still; that for them consolidation means stagnation. For the British Labour Party this contention has never been tested, because only during its last term of office was it in power long enough and with a sufficient majority to turn its theories into statutory facts. Certainly throughout the six years 1945-51 the Labour Party in office moved Leftwards in principle and practice. Now, in Opposition, Mr. Bevan represents the motion that many Socialists interpret as animation.

The early days of Mr. Bevan are very like those of half-a-dozen other miners turned politicians, except that possibly he spent a shorter time at the coal face than some. This part of his career is set in a familiar pattern, and only in the intense, almost pathological, bitterness that Mr. Bevan developed over aspects of his childhood and youth does the story differ from that of men like Mr. James Griffiths, Mr. Ebby Edwards and Sir Will Lawther. They became realists, Mr. Bevan did not. He belongs to the A. J. Cook class.

When young he contemplated emigration, but decided to "stay and fight it out." Mr. Brome quotes this decision as an example, seemingly, of Mr. Bevan's courage, but that is a doubtful claim, as in the view of most of us more courage is needed to go out to a strange land and begin life anew, than to stay at home and be rude to one's compatriots. By the time he had reached manhood his mind was closed to any new ideas, and his stay at the Labour College sealed it permanently. That is the significant fact. His course was set.

If then he has travelled the well-worn track of the agitator, or political free-booter as some of his friends have called him, the pre-eminent question is:—Will he ever be anything more? Are there the makings of a statesman in this middle-aged politician? Mr. Brome does not know and carefully avoids making any firm prophecy.

Mr. Brome does not offer any evidence that Mr. Bevan has thought out problems

calmly and deeply. Certainly Mr. Bevan's book *In Place of Fear* is only a hotchpotch of Marxist theory brought up to date with modern platitudes. Nor have his speeches been any more suggestive of depth or clarity of vision. His oratorical successes have depended for appeal on emotion rather than reason.

But if a politician is to prosper he has to possess not only good and sane judgment but also the capacity of firm loyalty. What are Mr. Bevan's loyalties? This book shows he has quarrelled with and denounced so many of his colleagues that the mainsprings of his career appears to be only hatred of the Conservatives and employers and an intense loyalty to Mr. Aneurin Bevan.

Has he courage? Yes, of a sort. In his youth he conquered his stutter. "During all that time I had almost to flog myself into speaking in public," he has said. Mr. Brome remarks:—"Deeply embroiled with Churchill, the Tory Party, America and elements of his own people, Bevan did not hesitate to take on the Press as well." Courage or bombast? Once he went down to speak to some dockers during an unofficial strike, and Bevan the agitator found himself in the odd position of trying to "quell a new generation of agitators." He lost his temper, and was as rude to them as he is to the Tories. Courage or bad temper?

Where, then, is all this going to take him? The book is no guide. Will this emotional orator, with an imaginary chip on his shoulder, emulate the great Welshman who first led and then destroyed his party? Mr. Bevan is no Lloyd George, but he may lead or he may destroy his party. He may do either, and if so which?

Unlike Mr. Lloyd George, the Demogorgan of Socialism has never fully captured the confidence of the Labour Party. He leads the extremists, men who do not care what happens so long as there is more and more nationalization; but he is distrusted by the party leaders and, more important still, the trade unionist members of the Party. This distrust is not only due to his rabble-rousing, but also to his unreliability; he is always ready to threaten resignation, with one eye cocked

on the groundlings who will cheer him to the echo.

At Margate he talked about the Labour Party working as a team, but no one believes that any team in which he figures is a comfortable one. At times, as at Margate, he can be friendly and winning, but that mood is never permanent; it is tactics rather than tact that controls him temporarily, but very soon the real man breaks out again. I believe he will always be the same. Some men become mellow and more tolerant when they attain power. Mr. Bevan did not, and there is nothing in this book to suggest that he will be any different in the future. Mr. Bevan is the idol of the theorists and malcontents, those who live in the hinterland between Labour and Communism, and if he moderated his policy (assuming that he could do so) they would turn on him as they have turned on other idols in the not so distant past.

Nor does the book suggest he is a clever politician who knows how to manoeuvre and how to wait. He has not the patience of Attlee, the skill of Morrison, the brains of Gaitskell or the solid, stolid force of character of the late Ernest Bevin. So much is clear and for that we may thank Mr. Brome.

But none of his shown and now realized deficiencies of character mean that Mr. Bevan may not ultimately lead the Labour Party. His strength may be that his weaknesses are mainly the deficiencies of Socialism. How much more comfortable and easy for the rank-and-file members of the Labour Party to have Mr. Bevan as their leader, talking the clichés of the 19th century on which they were brought up, than Mr. Gaitskell who makes some attempt to identify Socialism with realism. A crisis of national discontent skilfully exploited by demagoguery could bring Bevan to power. Such a crisis might occur under a Labour Government. But Mr. Bevan has at least had the intelligence to recognize that the most serious obstacle to his ambition is the Conservative Party.

The successful administration of the present Government has lowered the political temperature of this country and taken some of the fierce partisanship out

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of present controversy. This climate of opinion is unfavourable to a burgeoning Bevan. The probable victory of the Conservative Party at the next Election would deprive him of his opportunity. By 1960 the Labour Party may have found a better man than Bevan and a better need than Socialism.

MARK CHAPMAN-WALKER.

### SECRET HEROES

ABOVE US THE WAVES. By C. E. T. Warren and James Benson. *Harrap.* 15s.

WHILE I worked alone in eerie silence far from the light of day in the chill and gloom of the secret bomb-proof refuge of the Headquarters of H.M. Submarines in the spring of 1942, high above my head in the sunlight the late Admiral Sir Max Horton was discussing with one of his crack submariners, Commander W. R.

*This year, again*

## The Bedside 'Guardian'

(NUMBER TWO)

Following the success of the last Bedside "Guardian" (which sold out) Ivor Brown has made a selection from a further year's issues of the *Manchester Guardian*.

The Test Matches, the Coronation, the American Presidential Election are but three events from a wide variety of topics that make this such an excellent bedside book and a gift to suit all shades of taste.

Enjoy again those contributions by Neville Cardus, Alistair Cooke, James Bone and many new contributors, with the added enjoyment this year, of **Low's cartoons**.

12s. 6d.

— COLLINS —

Fell, the training of some picked men to emulate the deeds of the six Italian charioteers, who in December, 1941, had crippled the British Mediterranean Fleet by sinking the battleships *Queen Elizabeth* and *Valiant* in Alexandria Harbour. The Italians, of course, were merely carrying on their traditions of the First World War, when they had ridden madly astride live torpedoes to blow up Austrian warships off the Dalmatian coast.

Years previously gallant Commander Godfrey Herbert, who escaped from the sunken K-13 to succour the survivors, had planned something similar; and Max Horton himself in the 1920's strove in vain to interest the Admiralty in midget submarines. However, the incredible success of the Italians in Alexandria Harbour stirred the Admiralty to action. It was a bit late, but better late than never.

What the Admiralty did and how those charged with training the men to ride astride the chariots, as the two-man torpedoes were called, and man the midget submarines, with their failures and successes, is related in *Above Us the Waves*. It tells a factual tale in detail and rather soberly. Yet the authors have a fine story to unfold, and they were apparently favoured by the fullest co-operation officially and from those who took part in these operations. The strange things which happened in the course of training illumine the courage and enthusiasm of the men who were equipped to adapt themselves to an underwater existence among the fishes. One of their bugbears when submerged was oxygen poisoning, which gave them spasms or loosened their tongues as though they had been tipping. At times when practising cutting anti-submarine nets members of the teams became unconscious. One day the leader of a chariot, reaching the net at depth, looked round for his team-mate to find he was missing. At once the alarm was given, but the search was fruitless.

There was profound relief next morning when the missing man was found asleep on the beach. It seems that he was washed off the chariot, so he grabbed the net and climbed to the surface. Seeing no one to

assist him, he slowly made his way along the top of the net to the shore, where he dropped into the sleep of exhaustion.

Balancing their craft undersea was a tricky business, for salt water was more buoyant than fresh, and when they struck pockets of fresh water flowing from the streams they were apt to take sudden plunges to the bottom with unpleasant results; it took prompt action and strenuous efforts to get their unruly craft up to more reasonable depths.

While those who formed this secret force believed that they could do good work, doubts were expressed in some official quarters. To banish these doubts a mock attack was made on the battleship *Howe*. The teams which got through the defensive nets proved their case, though one man paid the price with his life, as others did during their arduous training.

Step by step the authors describe the build-up of the force until the attacks were ready to be launched against the enemy. Just as the Italians lost all the men who were sent to make the first attack on Alexandria Harbour, so the Royal Navy lost a submarine with ten charioteers on their way to attack Palermo. I have pleasant memories of her cheerful leader, Lt.-Commander R. D. Cayley, D.S.O., chuckling over his adventures as we chatted at headquarters just before he was lost. It was a sad blow, notwithstanding that the other attackers sank a new Italian cruiser and damaged other shipping.

A good story is how Commander B. C. G. Place, V.C., kicked a mine away from the towing wire of his midget submarine with the remark: "That's the first time I've ever kicked a mine away by the horns." Another amusing yarn is that of the non-swimmer who hid the fact for three years until an emergency compelled him to cling to the legs of a companion to save his life; while yet another tale relates how by quick thinking and swift action Leading Stoker Jack Harmon saved the life of C. E. T. Warren, one of the authors, by slitting his sleeve to relieve the deadly pressure of 2,200 lbs. to the square inch which had been accidentally released into his dress. It was the second time

## The Nemesis of Power

J. W.

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## A History of France

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MACMILLAN



that had happened to him. There are other exciting tales.

It is a mistake to state that the Italians achieved little at Gibraltar, for from their secret depot ship they accounted for eleven ships of over 54,000 tons, quite apart from the three ships sunk in the earlier attacks launched from the submarine *Scire*. It was indeed a severe blow to our shrinking shipping, and it startled the Admiralty.

The attack on Palermo and the sinking of the Italian cruiser *Bolzano*, with the adventures of those who took part, are especially readable. On the other hand, the pages dotted with footnotes, which add nothing except the latest rank of the men involved, tend to distract the attention and check the even flow of the story.

The outstanding achievements of this fearless band were, of course, the successful attacks on the *Tirpitz* and the Japanese cruiser *Takao*, which won for the leaders four Victoria Crosses and which, when the

citations were published, were broadcast by wireless and newspapers all over the world. It is a thrice-told tale which will live as long as our people take pride in the heroic deeds of the Royal Navy. And those who come fresh to the subject will find much to interest them in this book, which is well produced and illustrated with photographs, diagrams and maps.

DAVID MASTERS.

## Novels

THE HOUSE OF GAIR. Eric Linklater. *Cape*. 10s. 6d.

THE ALIEN SKY. Paul Scott. *Eyre & Spottiswoode*. 12s. 6d.

A TIME TO LAUGH. Laurence Thompson. *Deutsch*. 8s. 6d.

HURRY ON DOWN. John Wain. *Secker & Warburg*. 12s. 6d.

COUSIN CHRISTOPHER. Ian Hay. *Hodder & Stoughton*. 10s. 6d.

TOUCH AND GO. Jacobine Hichens. *Putnam*. 12s. 6d.

THE GO-BETWEEN. L. P. Hartley. *Hamish Hamilton*. 11s.

EVIDENTLY Eric Linklater thinks, like the late Mr. Belloc, that "nobody minds his books being all of different kinds." In *The House of Gair* a novelist, living remote in Scotland, his sense of values disturbed by his past, tells how he became the friend of one Crome, a man who, if anyone ever did, prostituted his talent. At first the reader may imagine Crome to be a satirical figure (and just the kind of one to suit Mr. Linklater), but as the story develops, as it is entered by such other figures as the deformed beauty Mary and the smoothly sinister young Denis, it grows plain that the purpose is serious. Gradually indeed it becomes apparent that the climax must be of tragic thrill, even if the narrator's own affairs (which, except insofar as chance entangles them with Crome, are rather digressive) provide an anti-climax in the word's proper sense. An effective story, for all its theatrical smell.

Serious or satirical, Eric Linklater's story is rich in fantasy. *Alien Sky* is a book



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of brooding realism which I found of absorbing interest. It is set in an out-of-the-way Indian station. Its time is the eve of the British evacuation, but almost all its British characters have no desire, even no intention, to leave India. On the other side of the picture are the Indian plans for and conceptions of independence. If some of the British understand the existence and nature of the racial gap, this is quite outside the comprehension of the young American who visits Marapore for what is a selfish purpose, and whose role proves to be to precipitate tragedy. Paul Scott handles theme, characters and oppressive atmosphere so that each becomes horribly real. No neatly-tied termination here.

There is realism of another kind in *A Time to Laugh*, which tells how Gadein left his tribe down in the very deep African south to join the Buna Service Corps and drive a lorry along the Derna road; how, amiable, incompetent and very anxious to be a good soldier, he found, to his bewilderment, that fate for ever put him in the wrong; how he came to be discharged and, still bewildered, to find himself at least a tribal success. Laurence Thompson tells his story remarkably well. Without his skill in making the savage's poor mind comprehensible, much of the misunderstanding that is the core of the story would be pathetic or enraging, whereas in fact it is extremely funny—often chuckle-aloud funny.

The hero of *Hurry on Down* is a young man who, having taken his degree, decides to escape from his bourgeois environment. He descends the scale of employment from window-cleaner via dope-smuggler to radio script-writer, meeting such folk on the way as naturally enhance his dislike for humanity, and some of whom the reader too will not find funny. John Wain is keenly observant (particularly of the murky side of life, it seems), capable of satire as well as humour, a first-novelist with a future. He is not yet a master of construction—his book sags in the middle and ends for no inherent reason. But it is decidedly readable.

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him for many years so popular an entertainer is provided by what, alas, is Ian Hay's last book. So skilfully is *Christopher's Will* reconstructed by Peter Fraser that it has at all times the authentic ring. It is brief and slight. Only seventy pages are left when we hear, or seem to, how Christopher left his money, so that the amusing host of parasitic kinsfolk, who have so long lived on him, find that they must make a living for themselves. This they contrive to do (with the Hayish antics to be expected when a Highgate mansion becomes a dubious club) in such a manner that the book ends on the note of happy-ever-after, for Christopher's one worthwhile relative and his young solicitor.

There is not really so much stronger a plot in *Touch and Go*, and there is much the same happy ending (for all who deserve it). But Jacobine Hitchens is not content with so superficial a portraiture. She makes us

share her interest in the beings of her characters—particularly Nat Conant, novelist and philanderer, and Janet, the unnoticed beauty imprisoned by her grim Presbyterian past. The relations between these two and therefore their relations with others—with diffident Timothy Stokes and his extravert sister Emma, with tempestuously amoral Teresa, with Berenice the manager of a matrimonial club—are the story, with a generous allowance of coincidence to keep it moving. The result is a very agreeable novel, one that makes a comfortable demand upon the reader's intelligence and emotion.

A man looks back on 1900, year of his thirteenth birthday, and, in it, upon the summer weeks he spent at a Norfolk mansion, home of a school-friend. Through the mists of time and despite a loss of memory he remembers a great amount of detail, nearly all of it vivid and

## CONSTABLE

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by Cecil Woodham-Smith

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interesting, if not all of it relevant. For the *raison d'être* of *The Go-Between* is the part the boy played in the love-affair between the daughter of the house and a handsome farmer, much beneath her in station. By way of cross-current there is the boy's quarter-belief in his own magical powers, a sentiment bred of one coincidence. The difficulty with a book of this kind is that the author has to assume that what he chooses to "recollect" will satisfy the reader, that the significance of this or that detail will be as plain to him as to the imaginary but omniscient narrator. My comprehension sometimes lagged behind L. P. Hartley's excellent invention, for all its skill and clarity of writing and portraiture.

MILWARD KENNEDY.

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

ANY publication which sets out to give a scholarly and comprehensive survey of the literature of the entire world from the earliest times to the present day demands sympathetic consideration. *Cassell's Encyclopædia of Literature* (Cassell, 2 vols. 42s.), edited by S. H. Steinberg, is divided into three parts, one giving the histories of the literatures of the world from oral traditions to the latest trends, the second containing biographies of writers down to the 20th century, and the third information about contemporary writers. Taking the books' vast scope into account, it seems to have been competently done and it should be a most useful work of reference.

\* \* \*

This may also be said of *Everyman's Dictionary of Shakespeare Quotations* (Dent. 15s.), compiled by D. C. Brown- ing. It consists of a collection of quotations from the writer's plays and poems, arranged in their usual order, with a plot summary before each play. Another section deals with passages throwing light on Shakespeare's life and career. There are nearly 4,000 extracts altogether. This dictionary is also a first rate anthology and it has been admirably compiled.

\* \* \*

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### The Diary of Samuel Pepys

Newly edited, entirely reset from the Rev. Mynors Bright's version, with modernized spelling and punctuation. Half as much again has been added to the former *Everyman* edition. 3 vols. (Nos 53, 54, 55.) 7s. per vol.

### The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

Newly translated from the historical manuscripts, translated and edited by G. N. GARMONSWAY, replacing Ingram's 'composite' Chronicle. (No. 62a.) 6s.

Gollancz's "autobiographical letter," *More for Timothy* (Gollancz. 12s. 6d.) is a frothing, foaming cataract of self-revelation, honest, entirely uninhibited, and very likeable. The author's account of his experiences as a master at Repton when the present Archbishop of Canterbury was headmaster is the most delightful part of the book. Mr. Gollancz had a splendidly tonic effect upon his pupils, but it seems doubtful whether Dr. Fisher would claim that his tactful direction left the slightest impression upon the most wayward member of his staff.

The purpose of the *Illustrated History of English Literature* (Vol. I, Chaucer to Shakespeare. Longmans. 25s.), by A. C. Ward, is designed to provide the general reader with a small-scale survey of the subject. The illustrations have been selected by Elizabeth Williams with excellent taste. Mr. Ward is not afraid to air his preferences. Of Shakespeare's sonnets he remarks that "taken entire the sequence is the matchless lyric achievement of English poetry in its greatest age." (To be published November 9.)

In *Men of Destiny* (Phoenix House. 18s.) the late H. C. O'Neill, who was perhaps better known as "Strategicus," set down four short accounts of the careers of Sir Winston Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, and Hitler. He also attempted to answer the fascinating question: How did they come to be what they were? Without solving this difficult problem the author offers well-informed, cleverly presented little biographies.

Among the numerous contemporary writers on politics and sociology no one presents a case more pleasantly than Mr. Leonard Woolf. *Principia Politica* (Hogarth Press. 25s.) is concerned with the fundamental political psychology of our era, and with the form which the eternal struggle between liberty and authoritarianism has assumed to-day. Its most interesting feature is the attention it pays to the nature and standards of values in the modern totalitarian state.

Mr. Woolf is extremely illuminating when he writes on life in Russia under Stalin.

In *Judgment and Planning in Chess* (Bell. 18s. 6d.) Dr. Max Euwe has had the profitable idea of studying a number of orthodox openings and positions from the point where the opening stage of the game has come to an end. It is most helpful.

The Marchesa Origo's *Leopardi: A Study in Solitude* (Hamish Hamilton. 21s.) appeared first eighteen years ago. The new edition just published has been revised and enlarged. With the aid of fresh material the author has managed to improve what was already an excellent biography.

Every year the "Christmas" books seem to appear earlier. Under the new editorship of John Hadfield, *The Saturday Book* 13 (Hutchinson. 25s.) is as pleasantly produced and as full of good, unexpected things as ever. *The Bedside "Guardian"* 2 (Collins. 12s. 6d.), selected by Ivor Brown from the *Manchester Guardian*, 1952-53, contrives to be both companionable and impressive. How well the contributors write! They have a notable reinforcement this year in the cartoons contributed by David Low.

*The Riddle of Emily Dickinson* (Gollancz. 21s.) by Rebecca Patterson is a piece of biographical detection which explains, convincingly enough, some of the mysteries of a little known personality and throws light upon the meaning of some of her poems. Another American poet, Carl Sandburg, has preferred to tell his own story in *Always the Young Strangers* (Cape. 25s.), which spans the years from Abraham Lincoln's America to the present day. In places it made me think of *Tom Sawyer*. It is honest, unaffected autobiography.

The late George Santayana and Mr. Alfred Noyes are also represented by volumes of reminiscences. Mr. Noyes's *Two Worlds for Memory* (Sheed & Ward. 21s.) has its emphasis on the literary side

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

of its author's life and makes quietly entertaining reading. Santayana's *My Host the World* (Cresset. 15s.) concludes the writer's autobiography and is a more ambitious work, including brilliant portraits of Robert Bridges, Lytton Strachey, and Bertrand Russell.

\* \* \*

The interests of Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell are widespread. Some idea of their range may be gathered from the agreeable *Truffle Hunt with Sacheverell Sitwell* (Hale. 24s.), urbane, civilized, and very well illustrated.

\* \* \*

The astonishing architectural creations of the Romantic Revival are among those included in Barbara Jones's *Follies and Grottoes* (Constable. 40s.), a remarkable compendium of information about the strange building freaks erected by persons of wealth and polite taste over a period of about 300 years. The pictures are worthy of the well-written text.

Colonel Charles Lindbergh's flying experiences, culminating in his famous atlantic flight, will be found in the well-told chapters of *The Spirit of St. Louis* (Murray. 21s.) An extremely lively, vivid book.

\* \* \*

It was a happy idea of Mr. Richard Usborne's to inquire into the behaviour and characteristics of the people in the Dornford Yates, John Buchan, and "Sapper" novels. He has called his book *Clubland Heroes* (Constable. 15s.) and in it he reminisces happily about Hannay, Drummond, Berry and other heroes of his youth. He will induce a great many readers to share his recollected pleasure with him.

\* \* \*

Messrs. Collins are to be congratulated upon their "New Classics," fifty years after their "Pocket Classics" first appeared. Forty-eight books have been published simultaneously. The type is clear, the format admirable.

\* \* \*





Balletomanes will find plenty to interest them in *Markova: Her Life and Art* (W. H. Allen. 17s. 6d.) by her famous dancing partner, Anton Dolin. It is a story of iron discipline and incessant hard work. Every ballet-struck young person should be compelled to read it.

\* \* \*

Students of Soviet policy will welcome the English edition of Stalin's *Works* now in process of publication. The first four volumes (Lawrence and Wishart. 5s.

each) contain his speeches and writings through the year 1920. Each volume, like the Russian original from which it is translated, contains a useful biographical chronicle for the period which it covers. Since Stalin's successors no less than the Communist movement throughout the world have developed under the immensely formative influence of his ideas and policy, it is of much more than academic interest to have the great tyrant's writings available *in extenso* in English dress.

E. G.

### Financial

## THE TRUTH ABOUT G.A.T.T.

By DIANA SPEARMAN

THE General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, usually known as G.A.T.T., is the remnant of a much more ambitious plan for expanding world trade. During the last years of the war, when plans for economic reconstruction were being laid, expert opinion was much preoccupied with the obstacles to world trade in the shape of high tariffs, competitive currency depreciation and import quotas, which had been rife in the 1930's. Accordingly, the projected international trade organizations were essentially designed to reduce these to a minimum. The International Monetary Fund was to supervise currency arrangements and prevent unfair competition through currency manipulation. The World Bank was to lend money to areas and countries which could not raise it through the ordinary money market mechanism. The whole was to be completed by a Trade Charter which was to lay down a code of fair dealing in international trade, and the International Trade Organization which would see that the provisions of this code were observed.

The Trade Charter was drawn up at a meeting at Havana which was attended by all the countries of the free world. But the only country which ratified this agreement was Liberia. The other countries waited to see what action the United States would

take, or, in other words, whether the Government of the United States would be able to get the Charter through Congress. In the end the United States decided not to present the Charter to Congress at all. This, of course, meant that the International Trade Organization was never set up.

But as a preliminary to the Charter the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade had already been drawn up, and in 1948 most of the countries of the free world agreed that they would operate under a provisional protocol of this agreement pending the introduction of the Trade Charter. This protocol is the famous G.A.T.T. In 1950 it was agreed by all the contracting parties that the provisional protocol should be continued.

These facts are not in dispute and are the only ones that have not been the subject of heated controversy. Both the actual provisions of the Agreement and its effect on British trade have been very differently judged by different sections of public opinion. Nor is this surprising when we consider that there are thirty-five articles in the latest edition and nearly every article contains an escape clause.

The original object of the Agreement was to reinstate multilateral trade. The controversy is now so completely dead

## THE TRUTH ABOUT G.A.T.T.

that it requires quite an effort to remember that the General Agreement was opposed in some quarters in 1948 on the grounds that a series of bilateral pacts would be a better way to secure Great Britain's rightful share in world trade. This nonsense about bilateral pacts, for nonsense it was, has now been dropped by everyone.

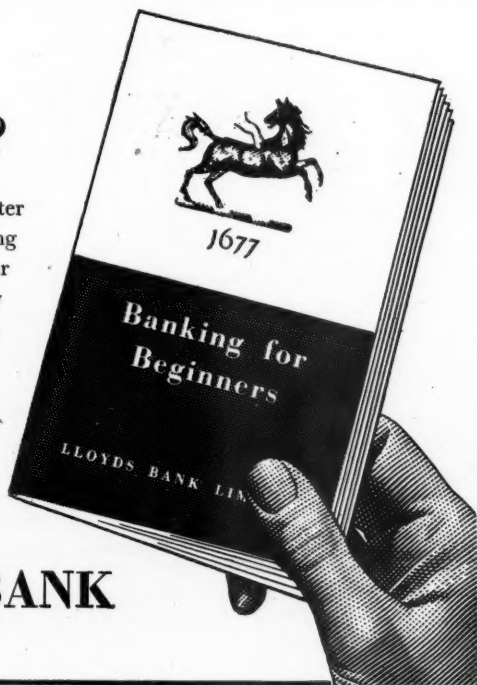
The thirty-five articles deal with a very wide variety of subjects, including raw commodities and monopolies. But the central provision is the provision against non-discrimination. Non-discrimination means that, while any country is free to impose what tariffs it pleases, these tariffs must be general and must not discriminate against the exports of any member country. Any nation adhering to the agreement and giving most-favoured-nation treatment to any other nation must also accord it to all the contracting parties. This is of particular importance to the British Commonwealth, as the British Commonwealth has a series of

trade agreements between its members known as Imperial Preferences which are discriminatory by their very nature. A strict interpretation of Article 1 of the revised text of the General Agreement would mean that these Preference would have to be extended to all the nations adhering to the General Agreement. By paragraph 1, however, it is laid down that preferences in force between two or more territories listed in annexes A, B, C and D can remain in force although they cannot be increased. On looking up the annexes it will be found that annexe A consists of the British Commonwealth; annexe B refers to France and her territories; annexe C refers to Benelux and their territories; and annexe D to the United States and the Philippines. There is also a provision that countries formerly a part of the Ottoman Empire shall not be debarred from continuing any preferences which existed between them on July 24, 1923.

The result of all this is, in simple

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language, that, while the members of the British Commonwealth can retain existing preferences, they are debarred from increasing the rates of preference. Article 12 also provides an exception to the rule of non-discrimination. It lays down that any country whose balance of payments is in disequilibrium may take steps to bring it into equilibrium by the imposition of import quotas, though not of tariffs. It is under this article that we have been able to discriminate against dollar imports. Under Article 1, any tariffs instituted to protect its own industries by any other member of the British Commonwealth must also be applied to goods from the United Kingdom. It is, however, possible for any country to refuse to cede most-favoured-nation treatment to any new entrant. This is very important at the moment with the possibility of the admission of Japan.

A series of tariff negotiations have been

conducted at the annual sessions of the contracting parties, by which mutual tariff concessions have been agreed between the United Kingdom and the other contracting parties. It is almost impossible to make a calculation as to the value of tariff concessions given and received, but it is certainly true to say that the United Kingdom has not suffered through these negotiations.

What effect has the General Agreement had on the United Kingdom's trading position? Whatever the effect of the General Agreement might be in normal conditions, it has certainly had very little practical effect since 1948. First, because every country, with the exception of the United States, Switzerland and Canada, has been in balance of payments difficulties, and the provisions against non-discrimination have been in abeyance. Every country has, of course, introduced import restrictions against dollar goods. The

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inability to increase preferential rates within the Commonwealth was clearly of minor importance when import restrictions might be and were placed on dollar goods. But even without the help of Article 12, the devaluation of sterling was a far more adequate protective device than any tariff, because it made sterling goods cheaper than dollar goods in terms of sterling, and thus gave a price incentive to sterling area countries to buy from other sterling area countries and to sell to dollar countries. The last United Kingdom Government also had a partiality for import restrictions rather than tariffs.

It is only since the dollar shortage became less acute, and since the present Government has tried to loosen up the economy, that difficulties have occurred. For example, the Government of the United Kingdom is now anxious to remove import restrictions on agricultural and horticultural goods from the continent in accordance with the trade liberalization policy of the European Payments Union. It is, however, obvious that some protection must be afforded to growers in this country. It would clearly be more advantageous for continental growers to have a tariff rather than import quotas to contend with, but under the Ottawa Agreement the United Kingdom is pledged to allow the import of agricultural goods from all Commonwealth countries duty-free. The imposition of tariffs on goods coming from continental Europe would, therefore, mean an increase in the margin of preference, and the United Kingdom Government is in a cleft stick. They cannot, under the Ottawa Agreement, put preferences on Commonwealth goods even if they want to, which, of course, they do not. On the other hand, they are unable to replace the present arrangements because these conflict with the General Agreement. This is obviously a farcical position, and the matter was raised by the President of the Board of Trade at Geneva in September. Another difficulty is that the General Agreement has the effect of preventing colonial territories from making trade arrangements with each other.

It must, of course, be remembered that,

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if Commonwealth countries are not allowed to discriminate in favour of each other, equally other countries are forbidden to discriminate against British goods. The General Agreement does also allow opportunities for complaints of unfair competition and unfair protection to be raised at the sessions of the contracting parties with more chance of their being heard and attended to than if they had to be raised through ordinary diplomatic channels. It is vitally important for Great Britain to have the greatest possible expansion of multilateral trade, and the General Agreement does go some way towards preventing a return to the more complicated discriminatory systems of the pre-war years. But this does not mean that it may not be very desirable to revise it in certain aspects.

Two points in which the General Agreement may be said to discriminate unfairly against the United Kingdom have been mentioned above. Another article which needs revision—and this is uncontroversial—is the one dealing with raw commodities. When the Agreement was drawn up, no one imagined the possibility of a shortage of raw materials, and therefore the only possibility mentioned was over-production. In modern conditions this is clearly inadequate. It is plain that a complete revision of the Agreement would make it both more workable and more relevant to modern conditions. Those who suggest simply denouncing the Agreement have never read it or seriously considered what implications such a step would have, or what the inevitable consequences would be. It must be remembered that there is not a single member of the Commonwealth in favour of denouncing the Agreement. Australia is the only one which is known to be in favour even of revision. The one way, of course, completely to get round any “no preference” stipulations would be to have Empire free trade with no tariffs at all between the various Commonwealth countries. This would be a Customs Union and it is expressly allowed in the Agreement.

DIANA SPEARMAN.

## RECORD REVIEW

By ALEC ROBERTSON

### *Orchestral*

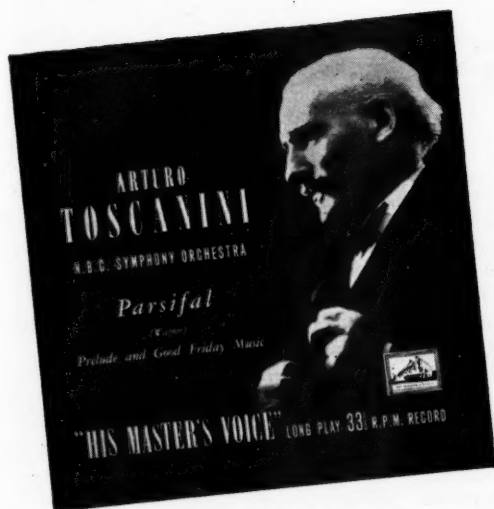
BEECHAM and the R.P.O. have recorded Haydn's D major Symphony (No. 93) and Mozart's "Paris" Symphony in the same key (K297) on Columbia 33CX1038, while Krips and the L.S.O. have recorded Haydn's "Oxford" Symphony in G and Mozart's G minor (K550) on Decca LXT2819. Beecham's Haydn, a successful transfer of the S.P. tapes (LPLX1361-3), is given a beautifully polished performance, clear enough to enable one to appreciate the wonderful finale of the work, but rather coarse in *tutti* passages. The Mozart "Paris" fares better and here again the performance is all one could wish. Both sides of the Krips disc are well recorded and he gives the most satisfying interpretation of Mozart's great G minor Symphony that we have had so far. His Haydn is almost as good, though perhaps a little deficient in sparkle.

Anthony Collins and the L.S.O. get a splendidly full-toned and spacious recording for their performance of Sibelius' D major Symphony (No. 2). The conductor is perhaps a little inclined to rush his climaxes, but his view of the work makes for exciting listening and leaves one in admiration again for the fine craftsmanship of the first movement, the gem of the Symphony (Decca LXT2815).

At last we have a successful recording of Brahms' lovely A minor Double Concerto, with Gioconda de Vito, Amadeo Baldovino, and Rudolf Schwarz conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra (H.M.V. BLP. 1028). The tone of the solo violin is a little thin at times and the cellist lacks the dynamic attack of a Casals, but in general the playing and ensemble of the soloists is very good and the richly melodious score lacks nothing of autumnal beauty.

Decca have done well to re-record the two Ravel piano concertos (D major and G major), this time with Jacqueline





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conducting the CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Symphony No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 36—*Tchaikovsky* ALP 1083

Music for Stringed Instruments, Percussion and Celesta—*Bartók* BLP 1032

conducting the PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

Symphony No. 4 in G—*Dvořák* ALP 1064

### WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER

VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Symphony No. 6 in F, "Pastoral"—*Beethoven* ALP 1041

### EDWIN FISCHER

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## THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

Blancard as soloist in both, and Ansermet conducting the Suisse Romande Orchestra. The pianist might have made more of the long melody of the slow movement in the D major (it can easily sound like a boring *pastiche*) but otherwise she is excellent, and the orchestral detail in the left-hand work, so lamentable before, is now reasonably clear (Decca LXT2816). The same orchestra and conductor give masterly performances of Ravel's *Valse Nobles et Sentimentales* and *Tombeau de Couperin* which are superlatively well recorded (Decca LXT2821). The *Valses* are rather more interesting music than the other work. It was the composer's declared intention to compose a chain of waltzes in the style of Schubert, but this does not go much beyond a time signature of three-four, the rest being pure Ravel!

Galliera's recording of some preludes and overtures from Verdi's operas (*Traviata*, *Vespri Siciliani*, *Aida*, *Forza del*

*Destino*, *Nabuco*) is as successful as his similar Rossini disc was not. The Philharmonia play for him at the top of their form and the music emerges vital and glowing (Columbia 33SX1009).

The Queen of Sheba makes a sparkling entrance in the introduction to the third part of Handel's *Solomon*, played with great spirit and style by Antony Bernard and the London Chamber Orchestra, and backed with the charming Overture from Fauré's *Masques et Bergamasques* (H.M.V. B10562).

Finally, in this section, one can put up with *The Ride of the Valkyries* (odious in the concert hall version) for the sake of the magnificently recorded *Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhauser* Overtures (the latter with the *Venusberg Music*) as played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under the inspired baton of Hans Knappertsbusch (Decca LXT2822).

### Chamber Music

A performance of Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge*, in its original version, that really comes off is a phenomenon, but the Pascal String Quartet have brilliantly achieved it on Nixa CLP1212, together with an excellent performance of the F major Quartet, op. 135. This company is issuing a good deal of chamber music that the interested record collector should examine, and this month they have put out the whole of Haydn's op. 22 played by the Schneider Quartet, but not yet heard by me.

### Instrumental

Gieseeking and Backhaus share a crop of Beethoven piano sonatas and leave me in no doubt as to which pianist I, personally, prefer. Gieseeking's playing of the *Pathétique* is the most perfect I have ever heard and the "Moonlight," on the reverse, is scarcely less good. The recording is rather shallow but not seriously disturbing (Columbia 33CX1073). He has also recorded the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* on Columbia 33CX1055, but in these Backhaus, in a previous recording, has the advantage of a big dramatic style though

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## Record Review

he lacks Gieseeking's poetry. On Decca LXT2780 Backhaus plays the E flat op. 27, Sonata attractively and quietly, also the two little Sonatas of op. 49, but is less happy in the first two movements of the "Moonlight."

A new star rises in Geza Anda, a Hungarian pianist in his early thirties who was once a pupil of Dohnanyi; and by star I mean not merely a virtuoso of outstanding outstanding ability but a musician of great artistic sensibility. On Columbia 33CX 1072 he plays both books of the Brahms-Paganini Variations (with a cut, however, in the finale of the first book) and Schuman's *Études Symphoniques*. He includes two of the additional variations in the latter work and it is in these, above all, that he shows his rare power of musical contemplation. At the other end of the scale he has great vitality and brilliance. The piano tone is good. Watch Mr. Anda! Another fine artist appears in Fernando Valenti, whose playing of a number of Scarlatti Sonatas on the harpsichord is simply magnificent. This is one of Nixa's issues of the American Westminster Catalogue and the recording is excellent (Nixa WLP5106).

### Vocal

There is a quite delightful recording of Donizetti's opera *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Carosio, Monti, Gobbi, Luise, Orchestra and Chorus of the Rome Opera House conducted by Santini (H.M.V. ACP1067-8). The opera is heavily cut—which it can stand—in respect of repeated material. Some criticism has been made of Carosio's intonation, but not having perfect pitch I did not detect lapses and thought her singing enchanting, as also that of Monti, who sounds like a youthful Schipa. Recording, good on the whole, sometimes a bit congested. Also highly recommended, Schubert's *Heine Songs* and Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* cycle sung by Fischer-Dieskau accompanied by Gerald Moore (H.M.V. ALP1066). Much of this material has appeared before on S.P. but it is good to have these splendid performances collected together here.

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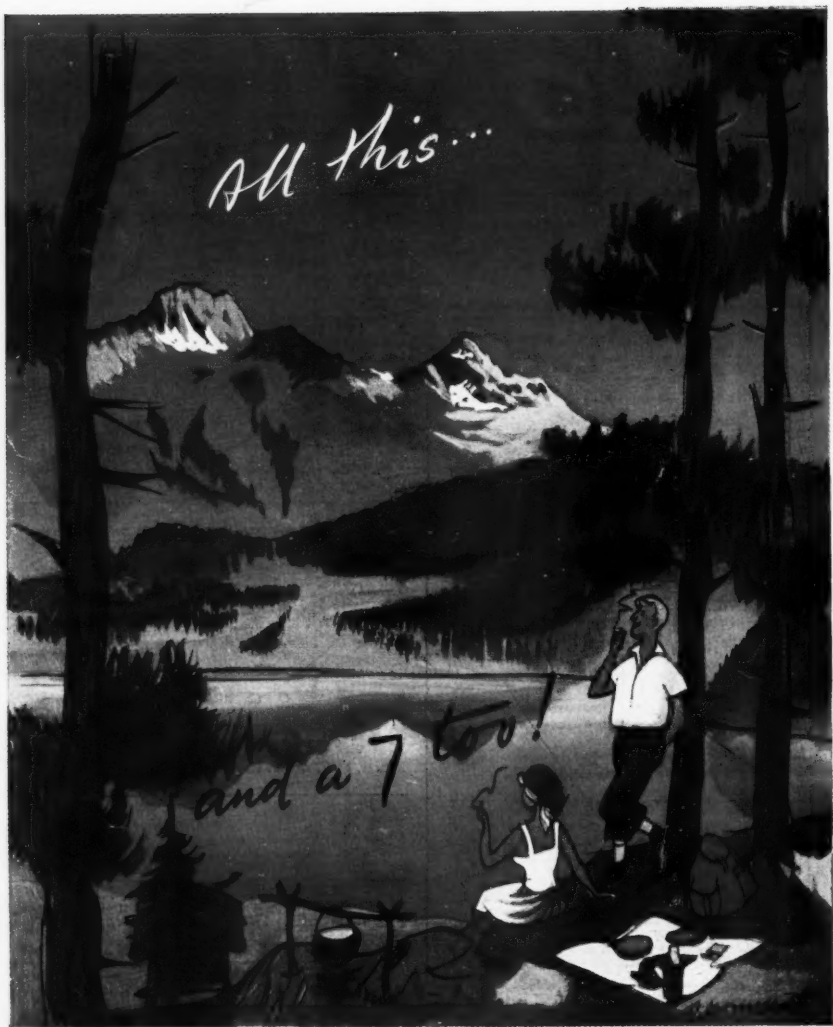
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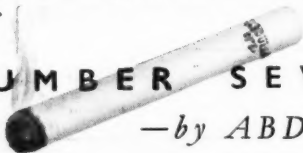


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High above the comfortable valley, but still as far as ever from the ancient,  
lonely peaks . . . Content for a moment with oneself, with one another and  
even with all the world . . . And for  
perfection one thing more—*

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